THE FATIMIDS

by

DR. ABBAS HAMDANI

PAKISTAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
PPH
KARACHI

The Author

Research in Fatimid history has been the concern of Dr. Abbas Hamdani's family for many generations, for they have preserved a large library of Fatimid manuscripts at Surat, brought originally from Yaman. Dr. Hamdani took his B.A (Hons.) and LL.B. degrees from Bombay University and the Ph. D. degree from the University of London with a thesis regarding Abbasid—Fatimid relations. Previously he was Professor of Islamic History in the S. M. College, Karachi, and a Research Scholar at the Ismailia Association, Karachi, where he wrote **The History of the Ismailis.** At present he is the Head of the Department of Islamic History at Islamia Callege, Karachi. He has travelled widely in Europe and the Middle East ; knows many languages ; has published research monographs and attended International Orientals' Conferences.

THE FATIMIDS

by

DR. ABBAS HAMDANI
Professor of Islamic History
Islamia College, Karachi

PAKISTAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
PAKISTAN CHOWK, KARACHI
1962

Dedicated To The Memory

Of The

LATE DR. PEER MOHAMMAD HOODBHOY

"It befits our brothers that they should not show hostility to any kind of knowledge or reject any book. Nor should they be fanatical in any doctrine, for our opinion and our doctrine embrace all doctrines, and resume all knowledge."

Rasail Ikhwan as-Safa, *Cairo Ed., 1928—IV, 105*

"Your concern is with young men of sound heart, who incline towards letters, begin to study sciences, seek the path of truth and the other world, believe in the day of reckoning, make use of the religious codes of the prophets, study the secrets of their books, renounce passion and polemic and are not fanatical in matters of doctrine."

Ibid, 114; cf. trans. in B. Lewis : Origins of Ismailism 95.

Board Of Intermediate & Secondary Education
3/168-D, KHALID-BIN-WALID ROAD, P.E.C.H.S.
KARACHI, NO. 29.

No. ISE/____________

Dated 26th March, '62

FOREWORD

The present work of Dr. Abbas Hamdani meets an urgent need of the readers for a history of the Fatimid Period which would not be tendentious, apologetic or controversial and which would treat the subject sympathetically. Moreover, it comes from a person who has devoted many years of research on Fatimid and Ismaili Studies, which gives authenticity to his interpretations and presentation of facts. It gives a lucid simple summary derived from a comprehensive field and as such is an excellent ready reference book. The Bibliographical Note given by Dr. Hamdani can profitably be referred to for further reading on the subject. The comparative genealogical tables have the value of explaining the rise of sects and schools of thought in Islam at a glance. The map of the Fatimid Empire as given here is the first proper attempt yet made to describe the extent of an ancient Caliphate. It has given me much pleasure to have gone through this book and I recommend it to the readers with all my conviction.

(Q. H. K. Bakhtiari)
Chairman

PREFACE

There should not be much to say in a Preface to a small book like this. Although it is concise and abstract and does not make an attempt to burden itself with learned references, its apparently simple material has been checked from a whole ambit of Ismaili-Fatimid Literature and Ismailitic Research. It omits, on purpose, the early history of the Shia and the details of the Period of Concealed Imams before the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa, but the few lines that have been given are intended to create a correct context for the origin of the Fatimid Rule. If the present work creates in the reader a taste for the Fatimid History and prompts him on a course of further study, it would have served its purpose.

I am grateful to Professor Bakhtiari, the Chairman of the Board of Secondary Education, Karachi, for writing an appreciative foreword. I have to thank my friend, Malik Noorani not only for carefully publishing this book but also for urging me to write it and encouraging me in the process. I am also obliged to my student Ashrafur-Rahman who kindly typed it out for me. I must also thank my financial troubles which usually awaken me from lethargy. And finally I must thank my students for whom this small book is primarily intended.

Islamia College, Karachi
March 1962

ABBAS HAMDANI

CONTENTS

(The map of the Fatimid Empire appears on the back title page)

· 1 ·

THE SHII ORIGINS OF THE FATIMIDS

The Fatimid dynasty that originated in North Africa in A.D. 909 was the work of a well developed intellectual and social movement, called the Ismaili movement, which in turn was a part of the general Shii movement. The Fatimid Caliphs were descendants of the early Shia Imams and their doctrines were part of the Shia principles.

After the death of the Prophet, when the question of succession had arisen a group of companions of Hazrat Ali who were called the Shia of Ali or the party of Ali had contended that the succession of Ali had been pre-arranged by the Prophet himself and they opposed the succession of Hazrat Abu Bakr. Although these Shia had to accept the political Khilafat of Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman, they, however, reserved the right to consider Hazrat Ali as the spiritual leader or the Imam. The early Shia, therefore, were purely legitimists, and racially only Arabs.

After the expansion of Islam in the time of Hazrat Umar, many foreign peoples such as the Persians, Syrians and Egyptians who had now come in the Muslim Empire and accepted Islam wanted the same status as the Arab Muslims. When they did not get this status they began to assert their national identity against the central Khilafat. This was the cause of discontent that ultimately led to the assassination of Hazrat Usman as well as to the popularity of the Shia with the foreign Muslims. The marriage of Husayn, the second son of Hazrat Ali with Shahrbanu, daughter of the last Persian Emperor Yezdgird III, had helped in the sentiment of the foreign Muslims for the Shia. Thus in the second stage of their development the Shia had Arab as well as non-Arab followers and, besides the legitimist claim of the dynasty of the Prophet and Hazrat Ali, they had now added the social grievances as a part of their movement.

During the Umayyad times, the Shia developed very rapidly because the Umayyad rulers on the whole were not considered pious Muslims. The tragedy of Karbala was a very strong factor in strengthening the emotional hold of the Shia on the Muslims as a whole and the memory of Karbala kept on inspiring various Shia revolts against the Umayyad Khilafat. But now the Shia themselves split into two factions.

The official Shia believed in the Imamat or spiritual leadership after Hazrat Ali, of his son Hasan, then Husayn, then Ali Zayn al-Abidin, son of Husayn, then Muhammad al-Baqir, son of Zayn al-Abidin, then Jaafar as-Sadiq, son of Muhammad. This line of Imams comes down almost to the end of the Umayyad Khilafat. They represented a mild and passive policy of opposing the Umayyads. After the setback at Karbala they were not prepared to undertake any violent action against the Umayyad Khalifas.

The second faction of the Shia was violent and it is to this that foreign Muslims turned to redress their grievances against the Umayyad administration. This faction did not represent any definite line of Imams but they revolted time and again during the Umayyad period. The first revolt was that of Mukhtar against Abdul Malik. He supported Muhammad bin Hanafiya, a son of Hazrat Ali, as the Imam. Although his movement died out, the idea of Mahdi which he introduced became a central idea in all the later opposition movements. It represented in the person of the coming Saviour a hope in the change of their society. Another violent movement was that of Zayd against the Khalifa Hisham. Zayd was a brother of Muhammad al-Baqir but differed from him on matters of policy. His revolt was also crushed. By this time the Abbasids had begun organising themselves and the Shia were at a loss whether to support them against the Umayyads or to oppose them. This was the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq, and also of the change-over from Umayyad to the Abbasid dynasty. This change of the Khilafat brought about a basic change in the Shia movement as well.

THE TIME OF JAAFAR AS-SADIQ

(i) The Doctrine of Qadr. All opposition movements in the Umayyad times laid emphasis on the doctrine of Qadr, i.e., free-will. They maintained that it is their religious duty to use their own intelligence and free-will in order to choose between right and wrong. They derived a political lesson from this, i.e., if the Umayyad rulers were bad, it is the

religious duty of the Muslims to change them for better rulers. This suited the interests of the Shia, and although this doctrine was first developed in the circle of Hasan al-Basri it was adopted by Imam Jaafar as-Sadiq. It also became, later, a central principle of the Fatimid movement.

(ii) **The Doctrine of Tawil.** About the end of the Umayyad period foreign works, mainly from Greece and Persia, on science and philosophy were being translated into Arabic. The new ideas contained in them were challenging the simple Islamic principles of the Quran. The Rationalists of the time, such as the Muatazilites, were trying to reconcile foreign thought with Quranic principles by the method of Tafsir, i.e., commentaries of the Quran. The Shia also adopted a similar practice. They said that the outward (*Zahiri*) principles of the Quran have an inward (*Batini*) meaning. The knowledge of the inward meaning can be obtained by interpretation, i.e , Tawil. This interpretation was not an ordinary commentary of the Quran but a definite philosophical teaching given by the Shiite Imams. This idea of Tawil, developed in the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq, became also another central principle of the Fatimid movement.

(iii) **Haqaiq and Imamat.** In the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq the Muatazilites and the Muslim philosophers were introducing much of the Greek philosophy. As applied to Muslim doctrines their philosophy was called by the Shia, Haqaiq, which means the Truth. They also asserted that the only way to arrive at this truth of life was to follow an Imam. The Shia theory of the Imamat was different from the Sunni one. With Sunnis a leader in prayer and a leader of jurisprudence can be called Imam. But for the Shia the Imam was the one and the only interpreter of law as well as life. He was considered a teacher and thus the Shia movement was also called the Taalimiya. The Fatimid movement of later times was built on the idea of the teaching of the Fatimid Imams who also became the political Caliphs.

(iv) With the change-over from Umayyad to Abbasid times the **social conditions** also changed. Now there was not only a conflict between Muslims of foreign nationalities and the Arab Muslims, but there was also a conflict on economic basis. The Arabs of the South and of the Persian Gulf area as well as the poor Persian peasants now began to join the Shia movement, in opposition to both the Arab and the Persian aristocracy.

The Persian converts from the orthodox Zoroastrian religion became now orthodox Muslims and those belonging to Persian heresies like the

followers of Mazdak and Mani proceeded to join the Muslim heresies like the Shia. Thus we find that both economically and religiously the Shia represented a revolt against the established authority of the Abbasids.

(v) The Shia revolt was a **culmination of many revolts** that had gone before. In the Umayyad times there had been the violent revolts of Mukhtar and Zayd. In Abbasid times there had been revolts of Nafs az-Zakiya and the followers of Abu Muslim al-Khurasani like Bihafarid, Muqanna and Babak, to mention only the most important. The rising sentiment of revolt had challenged the very succession of the Imamat of Jaafar as-Sadiq, to which we shall return later.

(vi) By the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq the Shia had developed a disciplined organisation like that of the Abbasids. It was called the **Daawa**. It was a religious mission as well as a political organisation. The officers of the Daawa who were called the *Dais* were missionaries, authors of Shia teachings, helpers in administration of the Fatimid Caliphs, political agitators in the Abbasid Empire where they wanted to see that the Abbasid authority was subverted. The *Dais* served many purposes and were systematically spread out in a large network throughout the Muslim Empire.

These were the main features of the Shia movement in the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq which were adopted later by the Ismaili Fatimid movement and Caliphate.

Conclusion

On the death of Jaafar as-Sadiq, there was a great split in the Shia movement. Two definite policies were adopted by the two contenders for succession to the Imamate : one was Ismail and the other was Musa al-Kazim. The Shiite organisation was split in supporting either of these two. Those who followed Musa al-Kazim and the Imams who came in his line (twelve in all) were called the Ithna Ashariya, i.e., Twelvers. They represented a mild policy of not opposing the Abbasid Caliphs violently. It was for this reason that Mamun could find it convenient at one time to appoint as his successor the Imam Ali ar-Rada, son of Musa al-Kazim, as the next Caliph after him.

The other son of Jaafar as-Sadiq, Ismail, was supported by the more violent and revolutionary wing of the Shia. They wanted to overthrow the Abbasid Caliphate and establish a Fatimid one. Ismail had the support of such important Dais of Jaafar as-Sadiq as Mubarak

and Abul Khattab. Ismail, or his son Muhammad being the seventh Imam in their line gave another name to the Ismaili movement which was called the Sabiya, the Seveners.

The movement of Ismail and his son Muhammad developed in the time of the Abbasid Caliph, Harun ar-Rashid. They had to go in hiding and three of their descendants remained hidden somewhere in Syria, keeping in touch with their secret organisation, preparing for the establishemt of the rival Khilafat and avoiding arrest by the Abbasid authorities. The exact order of their succession is not known. No less than two hundred versions are given, leading sometimes even to a doubt about the Fatimid origin of the Fatimid Caliphs. But from the Ismaili works of those times we have gathered a fairly good idea of this problem. The names of those Imams can now be fixed as Abdullah, Ahmad and Husayn. It was Husayn's son Ahmad who became the first Fatimid Caliph, Mahdi. He is wrongly called Ubaidullah al-Mahdi. It was he who established the Fatimid Khilafat in North Africa in A. D. 909 during the time of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir.

THE PERIOD OF CONCEALMENT

(a) Ikhwan as-Safa

By the end of the time of Imam Jaafar as-Sadiq a society of intellectuals arose who called themselves the Brothers of Purity, i.e., Ikhwan as-Safa. They began writing on all the known sciences of the time in a popular way in the form of story-telling. They combined all their essays in a work called the Essays of *Ikhwan as-Safa*. All the ideas of the Greek and Indian philosophies were incorporated into a well arranged system of thought by them. This work was almost like that of the Muatazilites. But, in fact, the authors belonged to an Ismaili group who were aiming at preparing an intellectual background to the coming revolt. These authors wrote their work secretly and placed copies of it in many mosques of the empire, suddenly at one time, without announcing who they were. It is supposed that these essays were finally compiled under the guidance of Jaafar as-Sadiq's great-grandson, Imam Ahmad.

(b) Imam Ismail

Jaafar as-Sadiq died in 148 A.H. It is said that his son Ismail, for whom many Dais were working had died in 145 A.H., during the lifetime of his father. The Ithna Asharis drew the conclusion from this

that the succession went to Imam Musa al-Kazim. Some Ismailis believed that the succession went to Ismail's son Muhammad. Other Ismailis believed that Imam Ismail lived till 152 A.H. and died much after his father. All this controversy arises because of the secret conditions in which the Ismailis worked, concealing themselves from the Abbasid authority.

One of the main supporters of Ismail was Abul Khattab, who is supposed to have insisted on the theory of the infallibility of the Imam. The second supporter was Mubarak who was mainly a political figure and his followers divided themselves into various groups, one such becoming later on the Qarmatians. The third supporter, who was the most well-known of the three was called Maymun al-Qaddah. He was a Persian born in Ahwaz, attached to an Arab tribe and lived in Mecca. He became a *Rawi* (relator of tradition) of the Imams, Muhammad al-Baqir Jaafar as-Sadiq and Ismail. He exercised such a hold on the Ismaili movement that later on it was supposed that the Fatimid Caliphs were descended from Maymun al-Qaddah. All the anti-Fatimid books of later times have spread this scandal about the non-Alid origin of the Fatimids.

(c) Imam Muhammad bin Ismail

He was born in 131 A.H. and lived during the time of the Abbasid Caliphs Mahdi, Hadi and Harun ar-Rashid. After the death of his father he adopted Syria as his home, and kept on travelling to Persia, Khurasan, and right up to the border of India, both in order to avoid arrest and also to spread his mission. In his later life he made friends with a Persian Dai, Husain al-Ahwazi, and returned with him to a place called Salamiya in Syria which became the headquarters of the Fatimid underground movement.

His chief supporter was Abdullah bin-Maimum al-Qaddah. This great Dai lived a very long life and became the protector of the three descendants of Muhammad, who also remained in hiding in Salamiya.

Shortly after Abdullah's death the Fatimid Khilafat was established. Abdullah is the author of many works and exercised such an influence over the Fatimid movement that most of its principles and organisation are attributed to him.

. 2 .

MAHDI: THE FIRST FATIMID CALIPH (297-322 A.H.)

The Early Life of Mahdi

At the end of the period of the hidden Imams we come to the life and times of Mahdi, the first Fatimid Caliph. His early life was passed in hiding and only at a much later stage could he establish the Fatimid Khilafat in North Africa.

He was born in 260 A. H. in Salamiya in Syria. When his father Husayn died in 268 A. H. he succeeded to the Imamat. But the entire control of the Fatimid organisation was in the hands of his uncle Said al-Khayr. By the time Mahdi became a young man, the sons of Said had all died and Mahdi had married a daughter of Said. Then he was able to take complete control in his own hands. In Salamiya he lived in the guise of a rich merchant, where his followers from many parts of the Muslim world used to come and meet him. The Dai Abdullah bin-Maymun al-Qaddah, had died and the Daawa was now in the charge of Husayn al-Ahwazi and Firuz.

Things were so secure for Mahdi that he thought the time had come for the establishment of his Khilafat, but a dispute arose among his Dais about the place where the Khilafat should be located. One suggestion was about Iraq, which would mean the overthrow of the Abbasid Khilafat, another suggestion was about Yemen which was an Arab country and also safe because of its mountains. The third suggestion was to establish the Khilafat in the remote non-Arab land of the Maghrib. However, Mahdi felt that pending a final decision he should leave Salamyia. His decision was further supported by the fact that the Qarmatians were now raiding Mahdi's estate.

Qarmatians

The Qarmatians originated in the Ismaili movement and in their principles and doctrines they were more or less the same. But because of

internal differences they separated in later history. They sometimes supported the Ismaili Fatimid Khilafat and at other times they opposed it. On the whole they were an extremist group. Their method was terroristic and their society was based on the principle of the community of land and property. Because they challenged many interests they were always represented in a hostile manner.

It was in the time of Imam Ismail himself that a Dai of his called Mubarak had converted a native of the Bahrain coast called Qarmatuya. Because this person separated from the main mission, his movement was called after his name as the Qarmatian. Later on, when various Dais kept revolting against Mahdi, they found it convenient to keep on joining the party of the Qarmatians.

On the question of where the Khilafat must be established another Dai called Hamdan Qarmat defected in 286 A. H. in southern Iraq. He insisted that, first, the Abbasid Khilafat must be overthrown and only then the Fatimid Khilafat could be established. When Mahdi refused this he joined the Qarmatians. It is said that the name Qarmatian also comes from his name.

The second group of Qarmatians separated from the Fatimid movement in 290 A. H. Under the leadership of Zakruya bin Mahduya, they made Kufa their centre. His successors began to raid Syria. They occupied Damascus and Hims. They also looted the treasures of Mahdi at Salamiya, just after Mahdi had left the town. Mahdi was now determined never to return to Syria, nor to think of establishing himself in Iraq, which became the headquarters of the Qarmatians. The likely choice of Yemen was also abandoned because the Qarmatians had become active there. The farther away his destination the better, he thought, would it be. So he proceeded to the Maghrib.

The Qarmatians had also established a small state of their own on the Bahrain coast where they were ruled by a Dai called Abu Zakariya bin-Mahdi. He was followed in the leadership by Abu Said al-Jannabi, who became notorious later on in the eyes of both the Abbasids and the Fatimids.

Mahdi's Journey

We have seen before that Mahdi had started from Salamiya in 289 A. H. He had reached Hims in Syria where he received the news that the

Qarmatians had invaded Salamiya, had killed his Dai, Husain al-Ahwazi; had tortured many of his family and followers left behind and had looted his treasury. So he now proceeded onward to Egypt. He was equally distant from both Yemen and the Maghrib. In Yemen he had sent his Dais Ibn Hawshab and Ibn Fadl, who established a state in the mountain lands, north of Sanaa. But the Qarmatian activities here made Mahdi give up the idea of going to Yemen.

In Egypt Mahdi had with him his Chief Dai, Firuz. It was he who had recruited the two brothers in the service of Mahdi, Abu Abbas and Abu Abdullah. The latter was sent to Yemen but when it was decided that Yemen was not to be the place of the Fatimid Khilafat, Abu Abdulla was withdrawn and sent to the Maghrib. In the meantime the Chief Dai Firuz, who did not like going to the Maghrib, revolted against Mahdi, became a Qarmatian and went to Yemen to stir up a revolt there. But he did not succeed and was killed.

Abu Abdullah ash-Shii in the Maghrib

The backward Berber land of the farther west of North Africa was the land of the lost causes of Islam. Many movements, which had been persecuted and exiled, found refuge in this place. The Khawarij had also become active here. In the time of Jaafar as-Sadiq two Dais, Hilwani and Abu Sufyan, had been sent there. There they had laid the foundation of the Ismaili movement. When Abu Abdullah was returning from Yemen he had met some Berbers of the Katama tribe who had come for the pilgrimage to Mecca. With them he travelled to their land in the Maghrib by the orders of Mahdi. The Maghrib was ruled by the Aghlabid Dynasty from Qayrawan. Abu Abdullah succeeded in occupying much of their land and defeating their last ruler Ziyadat Allah in the town of Raqqada.

In the meanwhile Mahdi had travelled from Egypt to Tripoli and from there to Sijilmasa where he was arrested. The Dai Abu Abdullah captured this town, rescued Mahdi and brought him with great ceremony to Raqqada, where he was declared the Fatimid Caliph in 297 A. H., i.e. A. D. 909.

Soon after, the town of Qayrawan was conquered and the traditional Muslim capital of the Maghrib became the first capital of the Fatimid Khilafat. Four caliphs ruled in Maghrib until Egypt was conquered, when the town of Cairo was founded and the headquarters of the Fatimids shifted there.

The Last Days of Abu Abdullah

It was Abu Abdullah who had helped Imam Mahdi in the establishment of the Fatimid Khilafat. But in the last years of his life he and his brothers resented the taking over of all power as well as all the treasures of the previous government by Mahdi. Moreover, they were also disagreed now on the way of ruling the state. They were influenced by the Qarmatian ideas of establishing a state in which the tribes could distribute land among themselves and have some type of self-rule. It must not be forgotten that Abu Abdullah had been converted by Firuz who had also now become a Qarmatian.

Imam Mahdi had Abu Abdullah and his brothers killed in 298 A. H. and attended a public funeral for them in whieh he praised their past services but condemned their subsequent betrayal.

Fatimid Influence in Other Centres

We had noted before that Yemen became a Fatimid state even before the Maghrib where in 268 A. H. the Dai Ibn Hawshab and his supporter Ibn Fadl, set up a separate state. But because of the activities of Firuz who had come to Yemen and spread the Qarmatian influence there, Mahdi had given up the idea of going to Yemen. However, under Ibn Hawshab, Yemen remained loyal to Mahdi after he had established himself in North Africa.

Ibn Hawshab had sent his nephew Ibn al-Haytham to Sind where the first Ismaili establishments in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent were made in 268 A.H., even before Mahdi had declared his Khilafat in North Africa.

In Persia, the Fatimid mission was very influential. The greatest Fatimid writers of all times who built up a large system of Ismaili doctrine, flourished in Persia and worked on behalf of Mahdi. These writers were Nasafi, Abu Hatim ar-Razi and Abu Yaqub as-Sijistani.

At the centre, after the death of Abu Abdullah another great Dai, Qadin-Nuaman entered the services of Mahdi and remained the chief adviser of the three subsequent Fatimid caliphs also, and died in Cairo when it had already become the capital of the Fatimid Empire. The early Ismaili law is the work of Qadin Nuaman. He is also the historian of the Fatimid movement and its establishment in North Africa.

Mahdi's State

At first Mahdi had ruled from Raqqada, then from Qayrawan and lastly from Mahdiya, a town he had founded near Qayrawan which still exists in Tunisia. He had also founded the town of Muhammadiya. These were not only fortified cities of the Fatimids but also naval bases for the ultimate invasion of Egypt.

Mahdi had to deal with the Berber tribes who were enraged by the death of Abu Abdullah. He had also to face the Idrisid power in Morocco and the Umayyad in Spain. Soon he found peace from all these. He extended his empire throughout North Africa, excepting Morocco and Egypt and also conquered Sicily from the Aghlabid dynasty. This European country experienced a flourishing Fatimid rule for nearly a century.

Mahdi died in 322 A.H. During his life two invasions of Egypt were undertaken under the command of his son, Qaim. Qaim succeeded Mahdi in the Khilafat. The invasions of Egypt led by Qaim in Mahdi's lifetime are discussed in Qaim's life-sketch, which follows.

. 3 .

QAIM : THE SECOND FATIMID CALIPH (322-334 A. H.)

Qaim was born in 275 A.H. at Salamiya in Syria. During the Khilafat of his father he distinguished himself in military action against the Berber tribes, who kept on revolting all over North Africa. In 299 A.H. he brought many of the Maghribi towns under Fatimid rule. In 350 A. H. he suppressed the dangerous revolt of Muhammad bin-Khizr whose Kharijite followers were active among the Berber tribes. It was under his supervision that the town of Muhammadiya was constructed. In the Maghrib another Berber rebel Ibn-Talut was suppressed by Qaim. He carried out raids on the southern coast of France with the new fleet which was built under his supervision at Mahdiya. He temporarily occupied the island of Sardinia near the Italian coast. The town of Fas (Fez) in Morocco was now conquered.

Invasions of Egypt

In 301 A. H. the first Fatimid invasion of Egypt was undertaken. From Mahdiya a fleet sailed towards the northern coast of Egypt and occupied Alexandria. Qaim himself led the army towards the Egyptian border. It was so arranged with the Qarmatians of Iraq that they would forget their past differences with the Fatimids and would march against Baghdad, thus helping in the Fatimid invasion of Egypt by diverting the Abbasid troops. But the Qarmatians went back on this arrangement and the Abbasids were able to prevent the Fatimid success in Egypt.

In 306 A. H. a second invasion was undertaken. At this time also the same story was repeated, with this difference that the Fatimids had made an advance right up to the Egyptian capital before they were repulsed.

These two invasions took place under the command of Qaim, but during the Khilafat of Mahdi. After his su ccession to the Khilafat, Qaim launched a third invasion of Egypt in 323 A. H.

under the command of his General, Raydan. But he was defeated and repulsed. The fourth invasion took place during the time of the fourth Fatimid Caliph Muizz; and this was successful.

In 322 A. H. Qaim succeeded his father at the quite advanced age of 47. Most of his achievements were already made during the lifetime of his father. About the time of his accession two important Dais visited him, Abu Hatim ar-Razi from Persia and Jaafar bin-Mansur al-Yaman, the son of Ibn-Hawshab from Yemen. During the last years of his life Qaim had to deal with a most dangerous rebellion led by Abu-Yazid.

The Revolt of Abu Yazid :

The Fatimids had come to power with the help of a Berber tribe called Banu Katama but there were the Banu Zanata, who resented the influence of the former in the Fatimid service. They accepted the Kharijite doctrine and their leader Abu Yazid was successful for two years in holding the whole of North Africa and Sudan. In 334 A. H. Abu Yazid besieged the Fatimid capital of Mahdiya. Qaim defended the town well. But during the siege he died. Before his death he appointed his son Mansur to succeed him however the news of Qaim's death was not announced till the revolt of Abu Yazid was finally suppressed in the following year, i.e., 335 A. H.

. 4 .

MANSUR : THE THIRD FATIMID CALIPH (334-341 A. H.)

Mansur was born at Qayrawan in 302 A. H. His entire upbringing was in an atmosphere of war in North Africa. He acceeded to the Fatimid throne at Mahdiya in 334 A. H. at the age of 32, while the revolt of Abu Yazid was in progress.

We have seen that Qaim had successfully defended Mahdiya against Abu Yazid, now Mansur completed the success by breaking the latter's siege of the capital.

Abu Yazid withdrew to the port of Susa. Mansur sent his able General, Jawhar to Susa and it was finally subdued. Abu Yazid then escaped to Tangiers. There he was met by another General of Mansur, Ziri bin Manad, the leader of the Sanhaja Berber tribe. With Ziri's help Abu Yazid was finally defeated in 336 A. H. at Fort Katama. His sons continued to make trouble until 341 A. H. when they were all subdued.

Another revolt broke out at Tahert on behalf of the Umayyads of Spain. Again with Ziri's help it was crushed.

Sicily

In this Mediterranean island some Muslim Arab tribes had established themselves with the help of Mahdi, the first Fatimid Caliph. Now Mansur sent, in 337 A. H., Amir Hasan bin Ali of the famous influential tribe of Banu Kalb. The Muslim rule of Amir Hasan bin Ali and his dynasty on behalf of the Fatimids is known for its arts and

architecture and a glorious and prosperous period of Muslim civilization in that European island.

During his lifetime, Mansur had built a town known after him as Al-Mansuria which served as his capital for sometime. After a rule of seven years, at the age of 39, Mansur died in 341 A. H. and was buried at Mahdiya.

. 5 .

MUIZZ : THE FOURTH FATIMID CALIPH (341-365 A. H.)

Muizz was born at Mahdiya in 319 A. H. His entire upbringing was in an atmosphere of war and he was trained to be a good soldier. He had also to acquired a knowledge of many languages like Arabic, Berber, Nubian, old Italian, Greek and the Slav languages. On the death of his father in 341 A. H. he was appointed next Caliph at Mahdiya.

His first problem was to subjugate the **Maghrib** which had revolted under the instigation of Abdur Rahman III of Spain and the Idrisids of Morocco. Muizz utilised the able services of Ziri bin Manad of the Sanhaja tribe and Jawhar, a freed Sicilian slave, in bringing the entire North African territory once again under the rule of the Fatimids.

Abdur Rahman III of **Spain** had also declared himself Caliph in 317 A.H.(929A.D.) and had entered into a bitter rivalry with the Fatimids. When Jawhar took the district of Ceuta (Tangiers) on the African coast, opposite Gibraltar, the last outpost of Umayyad influence in the Maghrib was lost. The Umayyad began to withdraw into their Spanish affairs, and the Fatimids to devote their attention towards the conquest of Egypt. The Maghrib, therefore, was for the time being left in peace.

Crete, this Mediterranean island was ruled by Muslims exiled from Spain since 204 A. H. It was now threatened by the Byzantines. The Abbasids of Baghdad, the Ikhshidis of Egypt and the Hamdanids of Syria were all aspiring for the occupation of Crete. But Muizz was quick in sending help to the Cretans, isolating the Umayyad Spain from Byzantine help, spoiling the chances of the Abbasids and

the Ikhshidids, and using Crete as a base for the future conquest of Egypt. Crete remained a district of the Fatimid Empire until 351 A.H.

The island of **Sicily** was ruled by the Arab dynasty of Amir Ahmad bin Hasan since the time of and on behalf of the first Fatimid Caliph Mahdi. Now it was attacked by the Byzantines. Muizz was successful in sending help so that Sicily was not only saved but came more under the control of the Fatimids. Even though the rule of Amir Ahmad ended in 389 A.H. Sicily remained a Fatimid province until 484 A.H. when finally it was occupied by the Normans.

The Conquest of Egypt

Since its occupation by Amr ibn-al-As in the time of Hazrat Umar, this ancient Pharaonic land, which had seen glorious periods in her history under the Greeks and then the Romans, was ruled from the flourishing town of Fustat. Egypt was the main source of revenue, first for the Umayyad dynasty of Damascus and later for the Abbasids of Baghdad. But it had become independent in the middle Abbasid period, first under the Tulunids and then under the Ikhshidids. In the time of Muizz Egypt was ruled by a Negro slave of the Ikhshidids, the very able administrator, Kafur. After the peaceful rule of Kafur, Egypt faced considerable misrule, resulting in famine and plague The entire administration had been corrupted. The three Fatimid invasions before had also created much confusion in Egypt. The Fatimid mission was very active and was able to win over secretly the support of the Chief Wazir and the Chief Qadi as well as that of the Treasurer of the kingdom. The stage was set for the ultimate conquest of the country.

Egypt was the target of the Fatimids during the time of the first three Caliphs. Three unsuccessful attempts had already been made. Now the conditions were favourable. Caliph Muizz had under his control all of North Africa, Sicily and Crete. He had built roads upto the borders of Egypt with various halting places where his troops could find provisions and water. Above all he had discovered in the North African campaign a general who was most suited for the final attack on Egypt. He was Jawhar, now entrusted with the new task.

In 358 A.H. Muizz demanded the homage of all his troops, of all his governors and of his entire family, for the Qaid Jawhar who was given a most impressive farewell for his journey to Egypt. Soon he reached Alexandria and the town of Fustat led by the Wazir, the Qadi

and the Treasurer, came over to welcome Jawhar and thus Egypt was finally annexed.

Immediately Jawhar introduced financial reforms in Egypt thus bringing peace and prosperity to the country. He also ordered the building of a new capital city outside Fustat which was known as al-Qahira al-Mahrusa (the Guarded City of Mars), what we now know as Cairo. He futher ordered the building of a great mosque famous by the name of Azhar, where also a University was instituted, the oldest surviving University in the world today. Jawhar also arranged for the occupation of Syria. All this was achieved between 358 A.H. and 363 A.H., the year in which Muizz started from Mahdiya towards his new capital city, Cairo.

The Journey of Muizz to Egypt
(Between 353 A.H. and 363 A.H)

While Qaid Jawhar was consolidating his successes in Egypt, the Caliph Muizz was preparing his departure to that country. First he had the problem of crushing the rebellion of Muhammad bin Khizr, the Kharijite Chief of the Berber tribe of Banu Zanata. This he did successfully by employing the able services of his general Bulkin, the son of the Sanhaja Chief. Ziri bin Manad.

Bulkin was appointed the Governor of North Africa, when Muizz started his journey. First he visited the islands of Sardinia and Sicily in the Mediterranean, which were under Fatimid rule , then returned to Tripoli in Libya, and from there proceeded to Alexandria in Egypt. With him were travelling the Qadin Nuaman, the poet Ibn Hani and the financial adviser, Yaqub bin-Killis. Ibn Hani of Spanish origin was a brilliant poet whose verses in honour of Muizz have survived to the present day.

Jawhar in the new capital of Cairo had constructed large palaces for the Caliph and his retinue, where Muizz was welcomed and from here his new administration was instituted.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF MUIZZ

(a) The Qaid or the C-in-C.

In the time of Muizz the Chief authority rested with the Commander-in-Chief because of the able services of Jawhar. Jawhar was a

Sicilian slave who had entered in the service of the Caliph Qaim. After the military exploits of the Dai Abu Abdullah ash-Shii who was responsible for the establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate, there was no commander to fill his place except Jawhar. Jawhar rose to prominence by subduing the Berber and the Kharijite revolts in North Africa and by occupying Ceuta (Tangiers), the Umayyad Spanish stronghold in Africa. Jawhar further became prominent by his successful invasion of Egypt. His name will always be remembered as the founder and builder of Cairo and the University and mosque of Azhar. Jawhar's services were all the more valuable to the Fatimids because of his loyalty. For four years he ruled Egypt single-handed, he restored prosperity where there was chaos and became so popular that he could have easily become independent of the Fatimids. But on the contrary he invited Muizz to Egypt and surrendered all his offices in the administration except that of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. He died in the time of the next Fatimid Caliph Aziz in the year 381 A.H.

There were other leaders in the military service of the Fatimids:

(i) *Ziri bin Manad*, a Berber Chief of the Sanhaja whose services in fighting the fellow Berber rebels under Muhammad bin Khizr were very great. (ii) His son *Bulkin* was another commander of fame who later became the governor of North Africa. Jawhar was accompanied by (iii) *Jaafar bin Falah* in his conquest of Egypt, and later it was Jaafar who brought Syria into the Fatimid State. Jaafar was killed at Damascus by a Qarmatian invasion which succeeded in coming upto the gates of Cairo, and was successfully repulsed by Jawhar.

The *Navy* was very important in the Fatimid administration, both for military as well as commercial purposes. The second Fatimid Capital of Mahdiya was primarily a naval base, which controlled the Mediterranean islands and which were launched all the invasions of Egypt. The Syrian Ports and Alexandria were soon built into strategic naval bases. Fatimids controlled the East-West trade route through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea which made them entirely independent of the Eastern Abbasid Khilafat.

(b) The Qadi :

The early Fatimid Caliphs themselves administered law and justice with the help of their religious missionaries called the Dais, till they found an able lawyer, Abu Hanifa Muhammad bin Nuaman, otherwise known as Qadin Nuaman. All the first four Caliphs were advised on all matters of law, religion and administration by the Qadin

Nuaman. He also accompanied Muizz to Egypt. According to the agreement with the previous Qadi of Egypt As-Zuhli who had helped in the Fatimid conquest, he was retained nominally as the Chief Qadi but the main power rested with Qadin Nuaman.

The Qadi was previously a Sunni of the Maliki School of Law, which was also the dominant school in North Africa and Egypt. Therefore, the law that was instituted as the official Fatimid law was mostly based on the Maliki Law, with all the variations of Ismailism introduced in it. This law was embodied in the classic Fatimid law-book *Daaim al-Islam* of Qadin Nuaman.

Qadin Nuaman was also the official historian of the Fatimids. His book *Iftitah ad-Daawa* described the establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate and the rule of the first three Fatimid Caliphs.

The main contribution of Qadin Nuaman lies in the fields of law and history although he wrote on almost all subjects, also the mainly religious. 800 lectures of the Qadi are collected in eight volumes called the *Majalis*, which picture the entire life of the Fatimids at the height of their power and culture. The Qadi died in 363 A. H. the same year as the arrival of Muizz in Cairo. He was followed in the office by his son Ali bin Muhammad bin Nuaman.

Besides the post of the Chief Qadi there was also the office of the *Muhtasib*, who was a Magistrate of the Capital, the keeper of weights and measures, the protector of public morality, the co-ordinator of the departments of police and justice. In short he acted at the Prefect of the Fatimid State.

There was further a *Court of the Mazalim*, i.e., the court to judge cases relating to complaints against the public officers. In this court the Fatimid Caliph personally looked into all the decisions, in order to see to it that there is no injustice or corruption in the state.

(c) The Financial Administration :

The Sahib Al-Kharaj : In the early days of the Khilafat, the rulers themselves looked into the finances till Muizz discovered the services of Yaaqub bin Killis. Yaaqub was previously a Jewish administrator of Egypt. Due to differences with the Ikhsidid Court of Egypt he had escaped to North Africa and entered into the service of Muizz. The entire North African

financial administration was entrusted to him and was reformed by him. He accompanied Muizz to Egypt. But according to an agreement with the local treasurer, Ali bin Yahya who had welcomed the Fatimid invasion, the financial administration was retained by Ali bin Yahya formally while the real power rested with Yaqub bin Killis.

The prosperity of the Fatimid State, the huge revenue from trade and commerce and the large expenditure on public works and religious monuments were all organised by Yaaqub bin Killis. His reforms in introducing a new currency hit very hard on the Abbasids because upto now the Abbasid coins were legal tender in the territory of the Fatimid Empire. Yaaqub lived till the time of the next Fatimid Caliph Aziz when he was appointed as Wazir. His later career will be summarized later.

(d) The Wazir:

In early Fatimid period the institution of Wazirate was not known because most of the duties of this office were fulfilled by the Dais. However when Jawhar entered in the service of the Fatimids, besides his military duties, he was also made the Katib or the Secretary of the Government.

When Muizz came to Egypt, he confirmed the previous local Wazir of the Ikhshidid court Ibn Furat as the Chief Wazir of Egypt because Ibn Furat had helped in the conquest of Egypt. Ibn Furat was a wise administrator and his services were essential. Although he repeatedly wanted to resign, Caliph Muizz would not allow him to do so till the end of 363 A.H. After that the office was given over to the Financial Administrator Yaaqub bin Killis.

Ibn Furat was re-appointed Wazir twice during the time of the next Khalifa Aziz, and he died in 391 A.H.

(e) Sahib ash-Shurta (Police):

Egypt used to have two types of Police, the Civilian and Military. This was confirmed by the Fatimids, who appointed trusted Ismaili followers to these posts.

In all the above offices, the Fatimid policy was to appoint a deputy from the Maghrib which showed that the interest of the previous Fatimid homeland were particularly safeguarded.

(f) The Daawa :

The Central Daawa : After the establishment of the Fatimid Khilafat the natureof the Daawa was transformed. It was no longer an organization working only for the overthrow of the Abbasid Caliphate, but was in addition, an organization to help in the administration of the Fatimid State Early Dais like Abu Abdullah ash-Shii were able administrators. Later the Qadin-Nauman occupied a high position in the civil and judicial administration of the State as well as in matters of religion.

When Imam Muizz came to Egypt the Daawa affairs were jointly controlled by Qadin Nuaman and *Jaafar bin Mansur al Yaman.* Gradually the Qadi concentrated on judicial matters, but the purely religious and organisational affairs of the Daawa were left in the hands of Jaafar.

Jaafar was the son of Ibn Hawshab who had established in 268 A.H. the first Ismaili state in Yaman. After the death of his father Jaafar had travelled to North Africa and entered the service of the Caliph Qaim. He also served Mansur and Muizz. He organised the mission activities in far away lands like Yaman, India and Persia.

Just as Qadin Nuaman was a specialist on law and history, so Jaafar devoted himself to the large body of religious doctrines contributed to Ismailism by the previous Dais. Jaafar concentrated on the system of Tawil i.e., interpretation of religious and philosophical ideas but did not like to introduce any new idea himself. The time of speculation had passed. In the new circumstances of the Fatimid State, the codification of religious law was now needed. This was done in the works of Dai Jaafar e.g. *Kitab al-Kashf* and *Asrar-an-Nutaqa.*

Daawa in Hijaz : Since the Fatimids were in rivalry with the Abbasids they wanted to enhance their religious prestige by controlling the holy cities of Mecca and Madina. These cities were ruled by Sharifs, descended from Hasan bin Ali. The Fatimid Daawa in Hijaz was successful in winning over the loyalty of these Sharifs to the Fatimid cause.

Daawa in Yaman : Yaman was the traditional land of the Shiism. It was converted to Islam by Hazrat Ali. Many Shii movements have flourished in the mountains of Yaman.

Even before the Fatimids were established in North Africa, an Ismaili State was already founded in Yaman in 268 A.H. by the Dai of Mahdi Ibn Hawshab, who because he conquered Yaman, was called by the title Mansur-al-Yaman. It was here that the famous Dais like Abu Abdullah ash-Shii and Firuz had come. If the Qarmatians had not become active, Yaman would have been the seat of the Fatimids. In any case it remained an important province of the Fatimid Empire. Ibn Hawshab died in 302 A.H. After him gradually the political power slipped away from the Fatimids. Only the mission remained which was again revived in Yaman. A sovereign State for the Ismailis in later Fatimid history, Yaman was also the centre from which the Fatimid mission spread to India.

The Daawa in India: In the time of Mahdi the frct mission in North India came under the Dai Haitham, a nephew of Ibn Hawshab of Yaman, In the time of Muizz about 347 A. H. *Multan* was occupied, where they converted a large Buddhist and Zoroastrian population to the Ismaili faith. But the Dai ruling at Multan came under Qarmatian influence and so he was replaced by another loyal Dai called Jalam bin Shayban, who instituted his dynasty in the year 354 A. H. Three rulers of the dynasty continued their rule of Multan and the surrounding areas of Sind till 401 A. H., when their state was destroyed by the Turkish invasion of Muhmud of Ghazna.

About this time the Fatimid mission established another state of their own in Sind with *Mansura* as their capital. It extended to Thatta and Daybul which also at times served as their headquarters. This second Ismaili state in India was also destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazna on his return from the Somnath campaign about 415 A. H.

A third state of the Ismailis under the sovzereignty of the Fatimids of Egypt was established by the *Sumra dynasty* with their Capital at Thatta. It remained for many centuries even after the Fatimid empire was abolished. The later Sumras whose religion became indefinite were finally replaced by a Sunni dynasty of the Sammas of Sind.

(v) The Qarmatians:

We have already noticed the origin of Qarmatianism and also discussed how they established small separate states in the vicinity of Kufa and on the Bahrain coast of the Persian gulf with *al-Hasa* as their Capital under their leader Abu Said al Jannabi. They became independent both of the Abbasids and the Fatimids. The Fatimids wanted to make a common cause with them because they desired the occupation of Egypt with their help. But on the occasion of both the first invasions of Egypt the Qarmatians went over to the Abbasid side thus defeating the Fatimid attempt on Egypt.

When Abu Said was followed by another leader Abu Tahir in the time of Muizz, the Qarmatians became friendly with the Fatimids. However this was not for long. Abu Tahir was deposed by his cousin Hasan al-Aasam who became one of the bitterest enemies of the Fatimids. He invaded the Fatimid province of Syria and killed the Fatimid Governor there, Jaafar bin Falah. He pushed his advance further into Egypt and came right upto the gates of Cairo, in 357 A. H., but was successfully repulsed by the Qaid Jawhar. Again in 363 A. H. when Muizz had already come to Cairo from North Africa, the Qarmatians invaded Egypt. With great difficulty they were finally defeated.

Hasan al-Aasam died shortly thereafter and his Qarmatian state in Bahrain became ineffective. In the later years of the time of Muizz the Qarmatians even paid tribute to the Fatimids.

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TIME OF MUIZZ

The first three Fatimid Caliphs had built new cities like Mahdiya, Muhammadiya and Mansuria. Muizz embellished these cities of the Maghrib, particularly the last one in which he built a large palace called "The Palace of the Sea". Within its precincts there was a large lake and in the middle of the lake there was another palace. A long canal of 73,000 leagues was built to bring water to the palace and also to irrigate the countryside near it.

In Egypt, Muizz was responsible for the building of the beautiful town of Cairo. The plan of Cairo was already given in advance by Muizz to Jawhar. In Cairo, the famous Mosque of Azhar was built. According to a plan of Muizz, a Great Eastern Palace was built by Jawhar in 368 A. H. with fortifications around it. It housed a secretariat and a big store of arms and ammunitions. It abounded in secret

passages and had 4,000 living rooms. It was known for its famous gates which opened to all parts of Cairo. Later in the time of Caliph Aziz a Small Western Palace was built and the large square between the two palaces was used for ceremonial parades of 10,000 horsemen at a time.

Muizz knew many languages and was a learned man. He had endowed large libraries at Mansuria and Cairo, and used to hold learned controversies at his court between the great authors of the time. Two of them were his Dais Qadin Nuaman and Jaafar bin Mansur al-Yaman.

In the court of Muizz also flourished the well-known Spanish poet Ibn Hani, who had migrated from Spain in 347 A. H., at the age of 27. His *Diwan* which is preserved to the present day contains most elegant devotional poems for Muizz. The younger son of Muizz, Prince Tamim was also an accomplished poet.

The Fatimids on coming to Egypt did not make any changes in the administration and law of that ancient country. They added the new colour of their own religion to the already existing institutions of the place. Cairo was known for its festivals. All Fridays were festive days. The two Ids and the Shia festival of Id Ghadir al-Khumm and the 10th of Muharram as well as the 1st of Rajab were celebrated with much ceremony. The "Festival of the Flooding of the Nile" which had come down from the Pharaonic times and the Spring Day, "Nauroz" were also celebrated.

Muizz was very tolerant to the local minority. The Christians and Jews held high offices. The Chief Physician, Musa bin al Ghazal was a Jew and became a famous pharmacologist of the time. The Coptic priest of Alexandria, Said bin Batriq wrote many works of science which were translated in Latin and read throughout Europe. He too worked under the patronage of Muizz.

Imam Muizz died in 365 A. H. at the age of 45, having ruled in Maghrib for 10 years and in Egypt for 4 years. He was succeeded by his second son Aziz.

• 6 •

AZIZ : THE FIFTH FATIMID CALIPH (364-386 A.H.)

Aziz was born in Mahdiya in 344 A.H. After the death of his elder brother, he was designated as successor by Muizz. On the latter's death in 365 A. H. Aziz became the Caliph.

First he had to deal with the Maghrib. The ruler of this province on behalf of the Fatimids was Bulkin. He tried his best to prevent other Berber tribes from entering into an alliance with the Umayyads of Spain. Bulkin died in 373 A. H. and was followed by his son Mansur in the Governorship of the Maghrib. Upto now the finances of the province were directly administered by the Caliph at Cairo, but now Mansur became independent and refused to show any account to the Caliph. However, the Governor and the Caliph died about the same time in 386 A. H. The next Fatimid Caliph Hakim confirmed the 12 year old son of Mansur named Badis as the next Governor of Maghrib.

The Qarmatians and Aftagin in Syria

Aftagin was a Turkish Commander under the Buwayhids. He became independent of the Abbasid Court, came to Syria, defeated the Fatimid Governor of Damascus, and began to rule independently in Syria. This was in the last days of Caliph Muizz's reign. Aziz, soon after accession, sent his general Jawhar against Aftagin. But now the Qarmatians led by Hasan al-Aasam came to the help of Aftagin. Jawhar was on the point of being defeated, when Aziz himself brought help. Aftagin was captured and brought to Cairo.

Aziz treated his enemy with great honour. He put all the Turkish prisoners under the command of Aftagin and created a new Turkish force in Egypt to balance the growing power of the Maghribi

Berbers. The Wazir of Egypt Yaaqub bin Killis is supposed to have contrived the murder of Aftagin in 372 A. H.

In Syria, other Turkish Amirs like Qassam and Bekjur kept on vacillating between the Fatimids and the Abbasids, thus making Syria a very insecure province of the Fatimid Empire.

The Wazirate : Yaaqub bin Killis

Yaaqub was originally a Jew from Baghdad. He had entered the service of the Ikshidid ruler of Egypt, Kafur, and had become an expert in the agriculture and revenue administration. On accepting Islam, he was entrusted to many high offices, bringing on him the jealousy of the Wazir Ibn Furat. To escape from the Wazir's enmity he left Egypt in 357 A. H. and went to the Fatimid Court in Maghrib. With Jawhar's army he came back to Egypt in 358 A.H. Although Ibn Furat was nominally in charge of the Office of Wazir, the real power rested with Yaaqub and Jawhar. Yaaqub exercised complete control of the administration in the last years of Muizz and during the reign of Aziz. Due to the murder of Aftagin, Aziz imprisoned him but soon had to release him as he was indispensible. He remained in the office, till he died in 380 A. H.

The Fatimids did not have a regular Wazirate till Yaaqub bin Killis made the office permanent. After Yaaqub's death many wazirs were appointed mainly Christians and Jews and twice Ibn Furat was restored to the office.

Religious Minorities Under Aziz

Aziz was a very tolerant ruler. During his time members of religious minorities had a fair deal. Many of them enjoyed high position. The wife of Aziz was a Christian and she had considerable influence over the administration. Almost the entire revenue administration of the Fatimids was controlled by the members of Christian and Jewish communities.

For most of the time during Aziz's reign the Wazir was the converted Jew, Yaaqub bin Killis. After Yaaqub's death a Christian Wazir Isa bin Nestorius and a Jewish Wazir Isa bin Manissa were appointed.

The Greek Orthodox Church was held in high favour. The two patriarchs of the Church were the brothers of the Christian wife of Aziz.

The head of the Coptic Chrurch, Efraim, was asked to build a big Church at Fustat.

The Qadi

The family of Qadin Nuaman, the great jurist and historian of the early Fatimids controlled the Department of Justice and Daawa in the time of Aziz. In 363 A. H. Qadin Nuaman had died and was followed by his son Ali bin Nuaman in the office of the Qadi, in the time of Muizz. He became all the more powerful in the time of Aziz. In his time the Department of Justice was given over entirely to the Ismaili officials. When he died in 374 A. H. he was succeeded in the office by his brother Muhammad bin Nuaman who died in the time of the next Caliph Hakim in 389 A. H. Both these brothers have written important works on law and religion.

Muhammad bin Nuaman encouraged the mission in Yaman which became quite active under the Dai called Abdullah bin Bishr. In India the Ismaili dynasty, which was founded in Multan by Jalam bin Shayban, was given all support by the Qadi of the Caliph.

The Death of Aziz

The Byzantines had started their aggression against the Syrian possessions of the Fatimids. Things became serious till Aziz's time when the Fatimid Commander in Syria Manjutakin was defeated by the Byzantines on the Raqqa—Aleppo front. The Byzantine Emperor himself led the army and in 386 A. H. occupied many towns of Syria. The Caliph Aziz therefore took a large force under his personal command and he marched towards Syria, but on the way in the town of Bilbays, he was taken ill and died in 386 A.H. Before he died he appointed as the next Caliph his eleven year old son Hakim, and his treasurer Barjwan as the guardian of the next ruler. Two important personalities of the State, the Qadi Muhammad bin Nuaman and a Maghribi Commander Hasan bin Ammar were taken into confidence. Aziz died at the age of 42 having ruled for 21 years.

The reign of Aziz was mild and tolerant. The Fatimids had stopped their conquests, were giving their interest in North Africa, and were concentrating on their positions on the Red Sea trade-route to the East. A keen rivalry with the Abbasids, competing in the Eastern trade, now became evident.

In Cairo, Aziz laid the foundation of a big mosque called Jamia Anwar which was completed in the time Hakim and has become famous as Jamia Hakim.

He also built a beautiful mosque called Jamia al Qarafa. The Small Western Palace was built during his time and at the Jamia Azhar, the University was completed.

• 7 •

HAKIM : THE SIXTH FATIMID CALIPH (386-412 A.H.)

Hakim's Khilafat is the most controversial in the history of medieval Islam. The events of his time have defied analysis; and interpretations ranging from the most hostile to the most favourable have been given. From the point of view of scientific and cultural achievements his reign was one of the greatest. But the confusion of events, and the strange personality of the Caliph have put his reign into an unfavourable mould of interpretation. However, it must not be forgotten that the great desire of Hakim for the reform of society and for scientific advancement helped by his highly sensitive nature, created so much opposition, that the mistakes he may have committed have been magnified far beyond proportion.

Hakim was born in 375 A. H. in Cairo, the first Fatimid prince to be born and brought up entirely in the atmosphere of Egypt. In 383 A. H. when Hakim was eight year old he was appointed Aziz's successor, and when Aziz died in 386 A. H. he was confirmed in his Khilafat.

As he was very young, the entire power in the state rested with Barjwan, the treasurer, now the guardian and tutor of the Caliph and leader of the Turkish faction, and Amir Hasan bin Ammar, the Commander of the Berber forces, and leader of the Berber faction. In his early days Hakim was helpless in the terrible conflict that took place between these two leaders and their factions. As he grew up, he attempted to break through these influences from outside, which explains many of the contradictions of his early life.

Ibn Ammar succeeded in getting full control of the administration and setting aside Barjwan. He adopted the title of Amin ad-Dawla, and it is said that he wanted to institute a secular state in Egypt, independent of the authority of the Caliph. Hakim, therefore, encouraged

Barjwan to stage his come-back. Barjwan allied himself with the Turkish Governor of Syria Manjutakin and a Berber leader, Jaysh. Ibn Ammar occupied Syria, arrested the supporters of Barjwan and transferred them to Cairo. But even under restriction, Barjwan's party finally revolted against Ibn Ammar, deposed him in 390 A. H. and finally got him killed. Barjwan now took out Hakim in public and while pretending to have the Imam's support. increased his own power and influence. The gradual decline of the Berbers and the rise of the Turkish faction were now completed in the time of Hakim.

The Rule of Barjwan

Now that Barjwan was in full power, he devoted his attention towards North Africa. Particularly because of the downfall of the Berber leader Ibn Ammar, the North African Berber population under their Governor Mansur, the son of Yusuf bin Bulkin, now revolted. Barjwan was successful in subduing them, but from them onwards Maghrib remained autonomous and only nominally attached to the Fatimid Khilafat.

In Egypt, Qadi Muhammad bin Nuaman died in 389 A. H. and was followed by the Qadi Abu Abdullah Husain, the son of Ali bin Nuaman. A Christian administrator Fahd looked after the finances.

Barjwan began to behave dictatorially. This was resented by the Caliph who now got him killed in 390 A.H. In Syria, the Fatimids had an able governor—Jaysh who tried to resist the advance of the Byzantines. He died in 390 A. H.

When Hakim was fifteen year old. Ibn Ammar,Barjwan, Jaysh and the Qadi Muhammad bin Nuaman were no more. The Caliph now took the entire administration into his own hands and appointed Husain, the son of the General Jawhar as his Wazir.

The Rule of Husain bin Jawhar and the Changes Introduced by Hakim

Husain did not have much power in his hands and the Caliph took the initiative in making many changes in the administration. He had noticed that the financial administration by Christian ministers like Fahd and Isa bin Nestorius had resulted in much corruption. The Caliph got these administrators killed in 393 A. H. Many restrictions on the dress and movement of the Christians and Jews were now imposed.

The Caliph believed that his court should be held during the night and the entire state business must also be transacted during the night. Unfortunately this resulted in the entire trade and commerce of the country being conducted after sunset which further resulted in much moral laxity and disorder. Hakim had to cancel this new arrangement.

Hakim completed the mosque of his father and renamed it Jamia Hakim in 404 A.H. which still exists in Cairo and is considered a monument of the finest Fatimid style of architecture. He built a district of Cairo called the Rashida District. In 395 A.H. the famous *Darul Hikma* or *Dar al Ilm* (the Academy of Science) was inaugurated which became the centre for the works of some of the most eminent scholars of the time. A magnificent library was attached to the Darul Hikma.

Upto now the Fatimid state had ruled over a non-Ismaili population without attempting to convert them to the principles of their religion. But Hakim took steps for the propagation of Ismailism and the enforcement of the Ismaili law in all matters where it differed from general Muslim Law. Darul Hikma everyday received new converts and a new religious tax of *najwa* was collected. All these also resulted in much discontent.

In 394 A.H. Hakim began to collect a large stock of wood on the Moqattam hill outside Cairo and the people feared that it was meant to burn all his enemies at one time, but it was later discovered that Hakim was only making some scientific experiments.

Hakim introduced a new Ismaili calendar, which was the same Muslim calendar with the difference that every month began at a fixed pre-calculated time, and not depending on the sighting of the moon. This calendar is still used in Egypt, with some modifications.

About 397 A. H. a revolt led by Abu Rakwa had started, taking advantage of the unpopularity of Hakim due to the recent changes he had introduced. Hakim suspected the complicity of the Wazir Husain bin Jawhar in this revolt. So he deposed him and later got him executed.

The Revolt of Abu Rakwa

In the last days of the Umayyad Khilafat in Spain, an Umayyad prince, Walid bin Hisham, escaped to North Africa, travelled in

the guise of a Darwish, visited Egypt, Syria, Mecca and Yaman; finally came back to the Maghrib and contacted the traditional enemy of the Fatimids, the Berber tribe of Banu Zanata. Now he adopted the name of Abu Rakwa, occupied the frontier town of Barqa and taking advantage of the condition of famine, plague and the disorders of Hakim's administration began to invade Egypt. The Chief Wazir Husain bin Jawhar and the Chief Qadi Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad bin Nuaman began to support Abu Rakwa secretly. But the Caliph deposed them in time.

He sent a general on the borders, who was defeated, but when Abu Rakwa was near the capital, the Caliph found the support of an able general, Fadl bin Hasan, who with the help of the Syrian army, kept on pursuing Abu Rakwa upto the borders of Sudan. Abu Rakwa pretended to be a Fatimid envoy in Sudan but was surrendered by the ruler of Sudan to Fadl bin Hasan in 401 A. H. Thus ended the revolt of Abu Rakwa. He was brought to Cairo and beheaded. The Wazir and the Qadi who had proved traitors and were deposed were now executed. Fadl bin Hasan was appointed Wazir. During the revolt Hakim had cancelled many of the changes that he had earlier introduced and to win over the Sunni population he had opened in the Darul-Hikma, a special department of the Sunni Maliki Law, in charge of its famous exponent, Abu Bakr al-Antaki. He had also punished the Christian and the Jewish officials who were secretly in league with Abu Rakwa. He endeavoured to deal with the different military leaders in Syria but made no attempt to occupy Syria completely. After the revolt, Hakim's administration became very liberal and he concentrated on the scientific and literary activities for which his Khilafat is famous.

It was in 406 A. H. when Hakim's Caliphate was in the most critical moment of its existence that the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad got a manifesto issued against the Fatimid genealogy, trying to bring the Fatimid dynasty into disrepute. There was no question about the Fatimid line from the time of Mahdi to Hakim and they were universally accepted as Fatimids. But now the Abbasid Caliph Qadir seeing his territory threatened by the Fatimids, finding his commercial prosperity challenged and taking advantage of the period of disorder in Egypt, gathered many scholars in Baghdad including a Shii poet, Sharif Radi, who had previously written in favour of the Fatimids, to sign a document to the effect that the Fatimid Caliphs were not descendants of Ali and Fatima but were descendants of one Said bin Ghadban ad-Daysani through Abdullah bin Maymum al-Qaddah, the Dai of the three Imams after Ismail. The famous historian Ibn Khaldun commenting upon this manifesto says:

" Their (i.e. the signatories) testimony is based on hearsay. Many of them were supporters of the Abbasids and were prejudiced against the Fatimids. The historians merely recorded what was given to them. Truth is quite to the contrary".

The Scientific and Literary Achievements of the Time of Hakim

After the revolt of Abu Rakwa, the Caliph began to encourage religious endowments for the two great mosques of Cairo, Jamia Hakim and Jamia Rashida. Further endowments were made for the University of Azhar. An observatory was founded in Qarafa. The irrigation of the Nile Delta was now done at a great cost by constructing a big canal from Cairo to Alexandria. The Darul Hikma or Darul Ilm, the Academy of Science became the working place of the astronomers, grammarians, philosophers, theologians and men of letters. We have already noticed the name of the Sunni learned man, Abu Bakr al-Antaki. The famous historian Musabbihi worked here. The great scientist Ali bin Yunus, who was in charge of the observatory at Qarafa, also produced many works at the Darul Ilm. Ibn al Haitham known to the European world as Alhazen, a mathematician from Basra, came to Cairo and was received at the city gate by the Caliph himself. He was put in charge of investigating the sources of the Nile, and in producing many works on mathematics at the Darul Ilm. Some 63 to 100 works were attributed to him. His pupils belonging to all communities, whose names need not detain us here, have also become famous. When the Chief Qadi Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad bin Nuaman was executed, the great Dai of Iraq Hamiduddin al-Kirmani was summoned to Cairo and was employed at the Darul Ilm, which now besides being a scientific institution also became the headquarters of the Daawa.

The Darul Ilm housed a large library where anyone interested in scientific study was allowed to come and consult its rich treasury of books. Free paper and ink were provided. The Caliph spent huge amount from his personal property in endowing funds to the Darul Ilm.

The Daawa in the Time of Hakim :

Since the time of Muizz upto the time of Hakim there had been great religious organisers at Cairo like the Dai Maybudhi and Dai Nishapuri. Immediately after the revolt of Abu Rakwa, the activities of the Daawa were suspended.

The Qudis belonging to the Nuaman family were either deposed or executed and there was no one to organise the religious affairs of the Empire, till in 401 A. H. the great Dai Hamiduddin Kirmani came from the East to Cairo. The Darul Ilm which had been temporarily closed, was reopened and made the headquarters of the Daawa.

(a) Religious Organization

It was in Hakim's time and under Dai Kirmani that the religious organisation of the Empire was finalised and this became the classic Fatimid system. This organisation can be described as follows :

At the centre, immediately after the authority of the Imam-Caliph was the Chief Dai known as *Bab* or *Bab al-Abwab* or more popularly as Daid-Duat. Under him there were twelve *Hujjas* in charge of the twelve districts of the Fatimid Empire. Next in rank were the *Dais* scattered all over the world wherever the Fatimid mission went, sometimes even as far as China. They were missionaries, propagandists, political commissars to Fatimid armies as well as political agents in foreign territories. They were also the most conscious and hard working core of the Ismaili community ; and on their voluntary and self-sacrificing activities was built the edifice of the whole Fatimid Empire. According to their services, ability and achievements the Dais were divided in the following ranks : *(i) Dai Balagh, (ii) Dai Mutlaq* and *(iii) Dai Mahsur.* Helpers of the Dais were called *Madhuns* who were again divided in the same three categories. Sometimes the Dai used to have assistants whose special job was publicity and defence of the faith against outsiders. They were called the *Mukasirs.* Any person who had joined the Ismaili community had a status and was called *al-Mumin al-Baligh* (fully initiate). The sympathiser of the Ismailis still outside the community was called the *Mustajib* (i. e. the seeker). Such was the organisation of the Ismaili Daawa under Hamiduddin Kirmani.

(b) The Dai Kirmani

Ahmad Hamiduddin Kirmani, a native of Kirman in Persia was born during the time of Imam Hakim, and at a young age rose to be the Chief Dai in the East i. e. in Iraq and Persia, under the hostile rule of the Abbasids. He was known as Hujjat al-Iraqayn. He was brought up in the tradition of the famous earlier Persian Dais on behalf of the Fatimids, such as Nasafi, Rāzi, and Sijistani.

In 397 A. H. he came to Egypt, which then was devastated by famine, plague and the revolt of Abu Rakwa. The Darul Ilm was closed down and the Qadi Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad bin Nuaman, who was in charge of the department of Justice and Daawa, was executed for treachery. About 401 A. H., the Darul Ilm was reopened and Dai Kirmani became the Chief Dai.

It was under Kirmani that the Ismaili States in India, of Mansura and of the Sumras, disscussed before, were encouraged and supported.

The last ten years of his life were passed not only in regularising the religious organisation, but also in producing some 39 authoritative works.

His works were devoted to definite purposes. The *first* was to combat the rising influence of the new sect known as the Druzes. Because they claimed the divinity of Hakim, they had become particularly dangerous to the state. With the permission of Hakim, Kirmani wrote a book called *Risalat al Waiza* against the Druzes.

The *second* purpose was to combat the rising influence of a Shii sect in Persia namely the Zaidites. Directed against them he wrote another work called *Risalat al Kafiya*.

The *third* purpose of his works was to see that the indulgence in philosophical speculation was checked because it led people to free thinking and destroyed the faith of the Ismaili followers. To this en d he w ote a work called *Aqwal al Zahabiya.*

The *fourth* purpose of his writings was to resolve the internal contradictions in Ismaili doctrines found among the works of earlier Ismaili Dais, and to standardise Ismaili beliefs. Towards this end he contributed a book called *Kitab ar-Riyad.*

The *fifth* and the ultimate purpose of his mission was to collect, systamatize and explain the entire body of Ismaili principles and philosophy which he did in a monumental work called *Rahat al-Aql.*

Dai Kirmani lived at the turning point of the fortunes of the Fatimids. He is the last in the line of original Fatimid thinkers. After Hakim and Kirmani not only the Fatimid power but also the Ismaili doctrine faced quick decline.

Kirmani died at Cairo sometime between 408 A. H. and 411 A. H., shortly before the death of Hakim in 412 A. H.

The Druzes

In the mountains of Lebanon where strange small religious sects still exist, there is also found a sect that had separated from Ismailism in the time of Hakim, called the Druzes.

In 408 A. H. from the Central Asian town of Farghana came a Dai to Cairo, and taking advantage of the confusion of that period, instituted a new sect which had as its central belief the divinity of Hakim. According to them, Hakim was the personification of God ; the age of *Qiamat* had come ; *Shariat* was no longer necessary ; and Hakim who disappeared shortly afterwards would return and bring a new existence to this world. It was to contradict the doctrines of *Farghani* that Kirmani wrote his *Risalat al-Waiza*. Farghani was killed in Cairo shortly afterwards.

In 408 A. H. another Ismaili Dai had come from Samarqand in Central Asia to Cairo. His name was *Hamza*. It was he who wrote many of the Druze works. Even today the Druzes of Lebanon have a separate calendar starting from 408 A. H. commencing a period called the "Era of Hamza." Again in 408 A. H. came to Cairo another Ismaili Dai, from Bukhara in Central Asia called *Darazi* who joined the movement of Farghani and Hamza, which was now called after him as the Darazi or the Druze Movement.

In 411 A. H. the Druzes started a rebellion in Egypt which was crushed, but many of them escaped to Lebanon where their movement and their sect still services. It is wrongly believed that Hakim gave them his protection, because if it were so then Hakim's Dai Kirmani would not have entered into polemics against the Druzes, and Hakim's Turkish guards would not have finally crushed the Druze rebellion

Disappearance and Death of Hakim

The death of Hakim was as mysterious and controversial as his life. Many theories and reports have been advanced as to the manner in which Hakim disappeared or died.

The historian, Musabbihi, a fair authority, writing shortly after the event says that in 415 A. H. a man was arrested in Southern Egypt who

had raised a rebellion. He later confessed to having killed Hakim and showed pieces of Hakim's bloodstained clothes. When he was asked, why he killed Hakim, he replied "for the glory of God." Further asked, in what manner did he commit the crime, he drew his dagger, stabbed himself and said "in this manner".

There is another story about the intrigues of Amir Yusuf bin Dawwas of the Berber tribe of Banu Katama. who is said to have contrived the death of Hakim. It is quite possible that the actual culprit mentioned above may have been an agent of Ibn Dawwas. It is reported that on the night of 29 Shawwal 411 A. H. when Hakim was going on his usual nightly visit to the Mount Muqattam outside Cairo for his scientific experiments and meditation, he was attacked and killed. After a three-day search his clothes and the dead body of his donkey were found but there was no trace of Hakim's corpse.

One report connects the cause of Hakim's death with Hakim's sister Sittul Mulk. It is said that in 409 A. H. when Hakim was passing by a rebellious quarter of Cairo, he found a letter on an effigy of himself, hinting at the loss of his sister's chastity. It is further reported that he ordered the quarter to be pillaged in punishment. But later he began to have suspicions against his sister. Sittul Mulk fearing Hakim's anger is reported to have got him killed through the intrigues of Ibn Dawwas. Another motive of hers is supposed to have been the fear that Hakim might change the succession from his son Zahir to a person called Abdur Rahim.

It is the belief of the Druzes that Hakim never died but that he disappeared from this sinful world, and would return again as a Messiah, to fill the world with justice as it was filled then with tyranny.

After the death of Hakim various impostors arose claiming to be the resurrected Caliph Hakim.

The Personality of Hakim

The personality of Hakim of all the Fatimid Caliphs needs a proper evaluation, because from the most hostile accusation of insanity to the most devoted belief in his spiritual power, there are a variety of conflicting theories about him..

Hakim possessed an impressive figure, a prophetic look and an ascetic behaviour. What the hostile writers think was his insanity,

may have been an enthusiastic purposefulness. What they call his fanaticism may have been his genuine desire to promote Ismailism which the Fatimid State had not up to now seriously taken up, because of the pressing problems of consolidation of the Fatimid State. What they describe as his cruelty and ruthlessness may have been his sincere attempts, however mistaken, to root out all corruption and meet the dangers of famine, plague and rebellion which necessitated the harshest of measures.

His solicitude for the men of learning and for constructive work in the State, as well as for the scientific achievements of his time are such saving features that any hostile interpretation about him needs the most serious modification.

Hakim has been the subject of many interesting dramas and biographies of later times. His life was indeed a legend.

. 8 .

ZAHIR : THE SEVENTH FATIMID CALIPH (412-427 A. H.)

Zahir was born in Cairo in 395 A.H. When he succeeded to the Caliphate he was 17 years old. During his minority, Hakim's sister Sittul Mulk ruled the Empire as a regent and acted as his guardian for full five years till 416 A.H. when she died.

During her regency the revolt of Abdur Rahim was suppressed in Syria. He had claimed to have been appointed successor by Hakim. Ibn Dawwas who was responsible for the murder of Hakim was also killed by the orders of Sittul Mulk. Two other wazirs who followed were also disposed of. Before her death she appointed a Council of Administration consisting of two ministers, viz. Ali Ahmad al-Jarjarai and Amir Muhsin bin Badis.

For three years after 416 A.H. Egypt passed through a series of bad Niles resulting in famine and plague. Two ministers were killed by a discontented mob. Slaves rose in revolt and there was looting and rioting all over the country. At last about 420 A.H. order and prosperity were restored and at about this time, Zahir took the administration into his hands.

Up to now, in Egypt, the Maliki School was the recognised Sunni creed, but now the Maliki theologians were exiled and the Shafii School gained ground in that country.

In Syria, various governors had revolted till Zahir found the able services of Anushtagin Dizbari who ruled that province for the Fatimids. Zahir also signed a truce with the Byzantine Emperor and he was recognised as Caliph by the Muslim population living in Byzantine provinces.

In 427 A.H. Zahir succumbed to plague and died at the young age of 32, having ruled for 16 years. His rule was liberal and just although much disturbed by the conditions of famine, plague and internal disorder. Zahir was fond of art and music, which he patronized. He was succeeded by his seven years old son Mustansir.

. 9 .

MUSTANSIR : THE EIGHTH FATIMID CALIPH (427-487 A. H.)

In Cairo there were two Jewish merchants, Abu Saad and Abu Nasr Tustari, Zahir had bought a Sudani slave lady from Abu Saad and had married her. By her a son was born in 420 A.H. who was named Maad Shortly afterwards Zahir had declared his succession, which finaliy came about when Zahir died in 427 A.H. Maad succeeded at the age of seven and adopted the title of Mustansir.

During the early years up to 436 A.H. the Fatimid Empire saw a sober and liberal rule of the Wazir Jarjarai. After his death the Sudani Queen Mother, relying on the newly introduced Sudani guards interfered continuously in the administration. She appointed as her adviser, her former Jewish master, Abu Saad. From now onwards for many years, al though the Fatimid state had many wazirs, Abu Saad remained the real power behind the throne.

In 434 A. H. a dangerous revolt was suppressed in Egypt. This was led by a person called Sikkin, who claimed to be the reincarnation of Hakim. Syria which had been so ably reunited by Anushtagin, went out of Fatimid control on his death.

Maghrib was ruled by a descendant of Ziri bin Manad, Muizz bin Badis, who now refused to pay allegiance to the Fatimids. The North African possessions were now more or less given up by the Fatimids who concentrated on their newly acquired possessions on the coasts of the Red Sea, both in Africa and Arabia. Thus they were brought in commercial rivalry with the Abbasids. Both the Caliphates had the same targets, India and China, for their trade. We find, that with this change of direction and policy, new Ismaili communities were now set up on the western coast of India. The Mediterranean islands like Sicily, which the Fatimids had controlled for the western trade, were given up. The result of all this was to be the forthcoming military conflict with the Abbasids.

Yazuri's Administration

After the initial period of anarchy in the reign of Mustansir, the Fatimid State at last saw a stable administration under the Wazir Yazuri. He belonged to Palestine. His family was very poor. By sheer ability he rose from position to position; was appointed a Qadi in Syria, and then in Egypt. He became a financial adviser to many previous administrations and finally became a Wazir in 422 A. H.

The eight years of his Wazirate, which lasted until 450 A. H., are marked by peace and prosperity in the country. At times Yazuri also controlled the affairs of the Daawa.

The main emphasis of Yazuri's administration was on agricultural reforms. He removed corrupt revenue officials, reduced the taxes, and brought down the price of corn by selling the Government stocks at cheap rates. But this resulted in a great decline of revenue and scarcity which was made up by a treaty that the Fatimids entered into with the Byzantine Emperor for the supply of corn. The next Byzantine Empress. Theodora however, refused to continue the arrangement with the Fatimids, unless a treaty of complete alliance, defensive as well as offensive, was signed. Yazuri took the risk of not signing it and by his great efforts the State did not suffer from any great hardship. Yazuri's attitude to the Christians and the Jews was very severe, because since the time of Abu Saad, the Jewish merchant who was the power behind the throne, the religious minorities had a complete control of the financial administration. Much of the scarcity and the resulting disorders was their creation and for that reason Yazuri took harsh measures against them. He imprisoned the Coptic patriarch and imposed heavy fines on the whole of the Coptic community when they refused to submit to his agricultural reforms.

Yazuri did not want to induge in any military conflict in order that his agricultural reforms should succeed. He carried this policy of peace so far that during his time the Maghrib was completely lost to the Fatimids, and the Fatimid military campaign against the Abbasids was sadly compromised.

The religious minority and the war-party finally brought him down by accusations of treason against him. In 449 A. H. Yazuri died, or was killed, it is said, by order of the Queen Mother. According to another version, he was executed.

Cairo, During the Time of Mustansir

Two important visitors had come from the East to Cairo about 439 A. H. They were the Dai Muayyad and the Dai Nasir Khusraw. In their works which have survived to the present day, we find a glowing description of the Fatimid Capital.

Muayyad described the changes in the Wazirates and in the Department of Justice and Daawa and at the same time he also described the great economic and cultural prosperity of Egypt. The details of Muayyad's life will be discussed later.

The Dai Nasir-i-Khusraw has written his famous *Safar Nama* about his visit to Egypt. He has also left a most graphic account of the great wealth and splendour of the Fatimid Court and the prosperity of Cairo, even at this period of comparative disorder. He described the Court of Cairo, its rich bazars, its festivals, its architecture, its army and guards and the ceremonial occasions which he attended. He also described the administration and the salaries of various officials. He pointed out that all the lands, houses, shops and inns were controlled by the state, that life in Egypt was much cheaper and prosperous than in any part of the Eastern Caliphate. He described the great Palace of Mustansir with all its pomp and glory and the great festival of the Flooding of the Nile.

Nasir ad-Dawla

After Yazuri's death in 449 A. H., until the arrival of Badrul Jamali in Egypt i.e. 466 A.H.; the Fatimid State was in a great crisis. These sixteen years saw the changes of 40 Wazirs and 42 Qadis. Everyday almost 8,000 complaints against the administration were received by the Caliph. During this period the only institution, which kept the authority of the Caliph in tact was the Daawa under Muayyad. In the early days of the Fatimids, the Berbers were the dominant military element in the state. From the time of Caliph Aziz, the Turks were brought in. The Queen Mother who was a Sudani introduced the Negro guards at the palace. A conflict now started between the Turks and the Negroes in which the Queen Mother began to arm the Sudani guards ; and Nasir ad-Dawla, the Commander of the Turkish regiment began to help the Turks.

Sometime after the death of Anushtagin, the Turkish Governor of Syria on behalf of the Fatimids, in 433 A.H., Nasir ad-Dawala was appointed the Governor there. But his presence in Syria militated against Fatimid

sovereignty, so he was transferred to Cairo as the Commander of the Turkish regiment. Here he waited for an opportunity to take revenge against the Caliph.

The Turks were able to defeat the Sudanis after heavy fighting. They then increased their pay to nearly 20 times its former figure. Nasir ad-Dawla declared himself independant in Alexandria, and from there marched on Cairo. Almost the whole of Egypt was in his hands. The Caliph was nominally retained . But he began, with the help of the Daawa, to arrange for the removal of Nasir ad-Dawla and for inviting some military leader from outside who could save the country from the ravages of the Turkish soldiery.

Nasir ad-Dawla's insurrection was followed by a series of bad Niles resulting in famine and plague. During this crisis the Caliph who was the richest of the Fatimids gave away all his property for the relief work. The Queen Mother now escaped to the enemy Caliphate of Baghdad. Mustansir himself had to live at one time on pieces of bread sent by the charitable daughters of the grammarian Ibn Babshad.

Fortunately, Nasir ad-Dawla was then assassinated and with the possible advice of Dai Muayyad, the Caliph now invited the Armenian Governor of Akka in Syria on behalf of the Fatimids, Badr al-Jamali, to come to Cario. With him the Armenian Guards too were brought and they soon restored order. When this had happened, the Fatimid State was again restored to prosperity.

Badr al Jamali

In Syria, in t he service of Amir Jamaluddin, the Fatimid Governor of Damascus, there was an Armenian slave, Badr, who adopted the the name of Jamali after his master. He gradually rose from rank to rank in the army and was appointed the Fatimid Governor of Akka (Acre). When there was a need of a strong and loyal commander to meet the adverse effects of Nasir ad-Dawla's misdeeds, Badr al-Jamali was invited by the Caliph. He agreed to come provided he could bring his loyal Armenian army with him and further his coming was to be kept a complete secret. He entered Egypt at Tinnis (Port Said), took the support of the Egyptian tribes of the Delta' and when he managed to have Ildeguz, the Turkish commander of Cairo, arrested by the Caliph; he entered the Capital. He pretended to be the friend of the Turkish officers, invited them to a banquet and had them all massacred on that occasion. He was invested with complete authority in all the departments of the administration by the Caliph. Only Muayyad was left in charge of the Daawa

as he is supposed to have advised the Caliph on inviting Badr. About the time of Muayyad's death in 470 A.H., even the Daawa was taken over by Badr al-Jamali.

Various tribes in parts of Egypt and Syria now began to desert the Fatimid state but Badr al-Jamali completely restored its integrity. He laid a siege around Alexandria and occupied the whole of lower Egypt. At Alexandria he built a beautiful mosque. He occupied Aswan and Upper Egypt which had become semi-independent. He reconquered some of the Syrian towns like Tripoli and Ascalon. In 466 A. H., the year in which Badr al-Jamali came to Egypt, there was an exceptionally good Nile and the conditions of scarcity changed to prosperity. To commemorate the happy events of this year the Caliph built a large library at Cairo.

Badr's regime is known for its architectural constructions, for its prosperous economy, and its patronage of art and literature. Badr himself has compiled a large volume of lectures called the *Majalis.*

In Syria, the Saljuk Amirs like Atsiz, Tutush and Sultan Barkiyaruq, not only began to reduce that territory to their control but also to fight among themselves. With great difficulty, Badr could repulse the invasion of Egypt by Atsiz. Almost the whole of Syria was lost, but Jerusalem, Tyre and the Akka were saved.

To commemorate his campaigns, Badr built many minarets and mosques wherever he went. They evolved what is known as the characteristic style of architecture. Of all the monuments built by Badr, the three gates of Cairo, which exist to the present day, namely, the *Bab an Nasr*, the *Bab al-Futuh* and the *Bab az-Zuwayla*, and the wall of fortifications connecting them are the most impressive.

In 471 A. H. when Badr was at the zenith of his power and had become quite dictatorial, a Persian Dai called Hasan bin Sabbah visited Cairo. The Caliph is supposed to have confided in him that he wished to give the succession to his elder son Nizar as opposed to the attempts of Badr al-Jamali to have the younger son Mustaali installed on the Fatimid throne. This was the reason why Badr quickly exiled Hasan from Egypt. All the same, Hasan went back to Persia and in the mountains of Alamut began to preach the Nizari cause. In 487 A. H., one month before the Caliph expired, Badr al-Jamali died, and Mustansir appointed as his Wazir a Persian called Lawun Amin ad-Dawla, who was weak enough to do what the Caliph would tell him to. But shortly afterwards the son of

Badr al-Jamali, Afdal Shahinshah, forced himself to the Wazirate at Cairo and when the Caliph died Afdal managed to have the former's younger son Mustaali succeed as the next Fatimid Caliph.

The Daawa under Imam Mustansir

(a) Nasir-i-Khusraw : Nasir-i-Khusraw was born in 394 A. H. in a village near the town of Balkh in Khurasan. He belonged to a Shii family who were not yet converted to Ismailism. At first he and his brother served in the Ghaznavid Court. Probably due to his views, he had to leave this Court and enter on a career of travel. He started from his home-town in 437 A. H. and after two years' journey through Persia, Iraq and Syria, he finally arrived in 439 A.H. at the Fatimid Capital in Egypt. Although Egypt was under-going a great crisis at that time, Nasir found the conditions much better than in all the countries he had travelled through. It is quite likely that he may have met the Dai Muayyad who also arrived in Cairo in the same year. The poems written later by Nasir clearly described the influence of Muayyad on him. He met the Caliph Mustansir who asked him to return to his home-country and spread the Fatimid mission there.

In 444 A. H. he arrived in Persia but was soon pursued by his enemies, the agents of the Saljuks. Finally he found refuge in a small town called Yumgan in the mountains of Badakhshan, in Central Asia. From here he kept on directing his mission as an Ismaili dignitary having been appointed to the rank of the Hujja of Khurasan. Here also he wrote most of his works, and died sometime before 470 A. H.

Nasir was a prolific writer. Unlike many of his Persian contemporaries he did not write in Arabic but in his own mother tongue, Persian, and thus became a popular author and a national hero. His chief work is *Safar Nama* which describes his travels. It is a frequently quoted work on medieval history, geography and commerce. He is also known for his beautiful poems collected in a *Diwan* which has endured to the present times. Many other works of his have been discovered and edited recently but we need not dwell on these here. Nasir almost became a saint in Central Asia and a cult of Nasir developed which was not necessarily Ismaili but was Sufistic. Even now in Central Asia a large Sunni community considers Nasir a Pir, not knowing his devotion to the Fatimids.

(b) Muayyad fid-Din ash-Shirazi : uayyed belonged to a Shii family of the North Persian Daylami mountaineers. Muayyad's father

came to the Court of a Buwayhid prince of Shiraz in South Persia, called Abu Kalijan. Muayyad was born in Shiraz in 387 A. H. and is popularly known as Shirazi. Muayyad's father and then himself were appointed Fatimid religious and political agents in Persia. Due to the pressure of the Abbasid Government, Muayyad had to leave Persia in 437 A. H. and after two years of travelling and contacting various Princes of Iraq and Syria, he arrived in Cairo in 439 A. H. He now aspired to become the Chief of the Central Daawa Organization which was then under the control of the Qadi Qasim bin Abdul Aziz of the Nuaman family. Egypt at that time was indirectly ruled by the Jewish merchant Abu Saad and the Queen Mother. Muayyad in his works describes the political intrigues in Egypt of that time. During the administration of Yazuri, Muayyad was first relegated to the Secretariat and then sent on a military mission against the Abbasids.

Thus in 449 A. H. started a dramatic episode in the history of the Fatimid and Abbasid Khilafats when they came into a military clash. It was Muayyad's mission to win over the local Princes of Syria and Iraq and with their help to invade the Abbasid Capital of Baghdad. The reason for this was that with the coming of Saljukid Turks as the rulers in the Abbasid Empire, there was a danger of their expanding their frontiers and invading Egypt. Such an attempt was actually made by Atsiz, a Saljuk Amir. Muayyad's mission, therefore, was to stop the Saljuks right at Baghdad. Muayyad prepared an expedition under a commander called, Basasiri, who taking advantage of the temporary absence of the Saljuk ruler, Tughril Beg from Baghdad, occupied the Abbasid Capital in 450 A. H. The Abbasid Caliph Qaim was imprisoned and for over a year the Khutba was read in the name of the Fatimid Caliph, even in the Abbasid territories.

However, after the return of Tughril Beg to Baghdad, the Abbasid Caliph was rescued, Basasiri was killed, the Abbasid Khilafat was restored and the Saljukid dynasty was firmly established under the Eastern Caliphate.

Even before the occupation of Baghdad, after completing his mission, Muayyad had returned to Egypt. In 450 A. H. he was appointed the Head of the Daawa, but in 453 A. H. he was temporarily exiled to Syria by one of the minor Wazirs. Soon after in 454 A. H. he was asked to return and was appointed again in charge of the Central Daawa Organization.

This was the period of utter chaos in the administration. Egypt saw changes of 40 Wazirs and 42 Qadis in quick succession. The only stable department was the Central Daawa under Muayyad. It is supposed that with the advice of Muayyad the Caliph finally invited Badr al-Jamali to come to Egypt as a saviour. Badr took charge of all the departments except that of Muayyad. Two months before his death, during his illness, when Muayyad had relinquished the Department, Badr took charge of it. Muayyad died in 470 A. H. The Caliph Mustansir himself conducted the funeral rites and composed an eloquent poem in honour of his Dai.

The Daawa organisation which was finalised in the time of Hakim was maintained with great efficiency and expanded in other parts of the world by Muayyad. It was this organisation that advised the military campaign against the Abbasids. It was again this organisation that helped in reviving the political rule of the Fatimids in Yemen under the Sulayhid dynasty and it was this very organisation that established the first Ismaili mission on the western coast of India. It was in 460 A. H. that the first Ismaili communities were established in the Gujrat Province of India. They also served the purpose of keeping the Eastern trade of the Fatimids alive.

Muayyad was in touch with two other well-known personalities of the time—Nasir-i-Khusraw and Abul-Ala al-Maarri. Nasir's works show the lasting influence of Muayyad, which we have already mentioned before. Abul-Ala was one of the greatest and most original thinkers of medieval Islam. His philosophy and poetry, coloured by his liberal views were not only a challenge to the orthodox Abbasid Khilafat but also to the Fatimid which had by now become quite conservative. Muayyad entered into detailed controversy with Abul-Ala. But both these scholars maintained in their works a high esteem for one another.

Muayyad's works were very numerous but we may mention only the three most important ones. One was his *Sira* an autobiography, in which he describes his role in the Basasiri incident which resulted in the occupation of Baghdad. On Abbasid-Fatimid relations it is the most valuable historical work. Muayyad compiled his *Majalis,* a collection of a thousand lectures. He also wrote a *Diwan* of devotional poems. All these have survived to this day. Muayyad was the last in the line of great Ismaili authors whose works have given a definite and distinct culture to the Fatimid movement.

(c) The Qarmatians : We have already traced the history of the Qarmatians upto the time of Muizz. After the death of their leader

Hasan al-Aasam, the Qarmatians were ruled by a Council of Elders in their State on the Bahrain coast of the Persian Gulf with its Capital at Al-Hasa or Hajar. Here they eschewed the politics of the time and developed a society on the principle of the community of land and property. This experiment in communitsic organisation in the history of Islam has been vividly described by the Dai Nasir-i-Khusraw in his *Safar Nama*. On his return from Egypt, Nasir visited the Qarmatian state. The later history of the Qarmatians is obscure. It seems that their lands were soon incorporated into the Saljuk Empire and their system was finally destroyed by the Mongol invasion.

(d) The Daawa in Persia—Hasan bin Sabbah : Hasan was born some time between 430 and 440 A. H. in an Ithna- Ashari family of Rayy, descended from a royal Arab family of Yamen. He was given a scientific education like that of his contemporary Umar Khayyam. The story about Hasan being a feilow student with Nizam al-Mulk and Umar Khayyam is obviously untrue as Nizam al-Mulk was at least 30 years Hasan's senior and could not have studied with him. He was also well-established in his political career much before Hasan was even born.

The Chief of the Fatimid mission in Persia at that time, the Dai Abdul Malik Attash brought Hasan bin Sabbah in his organisation and encouraged him to travel to Egypt, probably to meet the Dai Muayyad, and to become the restorer of the Fatimid rule in Egypt where it was in a great crisis. However, when Hasan reached Egypt in 471 A. H. Muayyad had died and Badr al-Jamali had already filled the role of a saviour. Hasan came in conflict with Badr over the question of succession but about this we have already read before. Hasan returned disappointed to Persia in 473 A. H. In the mountains of North Persia, at a most inaccessible and safe place called Alamut, he established his mission, first on behalf of Mustansir and then, on Mustansir's death in 487 A. H., on behalf of his son Nizar who did not succeed to the Fatimid Khilafat of Egypt. Thus the Persian Ismaili Daawa under Hasan became independent of the Fatimid Khilafat.

Hasan's followers were few and his territory was surrounded by a very hostile Saljukid state. To defend themselves and to survive they had to adopt terroristic methods. This resulted in the murder of the Wazir Nizam al-Mulk and many other dignitaries of the Eastern Empire. When the Crusaders came, the later Ismaili followers of Hasan bin Sabbah's mission called the *fidais* continued their terror against them for which reason they have been called in history as the Assassins.

A myth was circulated in much later times to the effect that Hasan used to give *Hashish*, an intoxicating drug, to his followers, and in

their state of unconsciousness they were transferred to a false paradise. When they regained their consciousness they were told that such a paradise would be for them to have for ever if they commited the murder of a particular enemy. Afterwards these followers used to carry out the assigned task. Because the murder was commited under the effect of *Hashish* these people were called *Hashshashiyin*, which term the Europeans corrupted into *Assassins*. The present meaning of the word *assassination* for political purposes comes from such an origin. The legend of the paradise was circulated by the European traveller Marcopolo, and it is obviously false.

The mission of Hasan and his successors continued in Alamut till the Mongol invasion. The Ismailis at Alamut were the first to bear the the brunt of the Mongol invasion. The present Imams of the Ismailis are not descendants of Hasan bin Sabbah, as is wrongly but popularly believed, but descendants of Nizar on whose behalf Hasan bin Sabbah was only a Dai.

(e) The Daawa in Yaman—Ali bin Muhammad as-Sulayhi : Before the Mahdi established his Khilafat in North Africa an Ismaili state had been formed in Yaman in 268 A. H. by Ibn Hawshab. On his death the political power slipped away from the hands of the Ismailis. But their mission remained and the various Dais that came after Ibn Hawshab were (i) Abu Abd Allah ash- Shawiri (ii) Yusuf bin Abit-Tifl (iii) Ibn Juftam (also called Ibn al-Rahim), in the time of Muizz (iv) Abd Allah bin Bishar; in the time of Aziz (v) Harun al-Qudami. in the time of Hakim (vi) Yusuf bin Amshah (or Asad) in the time of Zahir ; and lastly (vii) Sulaiman bin Abd Allah az-Zawahi in the time of Mustansir.

Zawahi realised that the time had come for the re-establishment of the political power of the Ismailis in Yaman To achieve this purpose he trained a young man called Ali bin-Muhammad as-Sulayhi. In 438 A. H. Ali took the oath of allegiance at a pilgrimage at Mecca from his Yamani followers. With sweeping success he defeated the Zaydites of Sanaa and Najah the ruler of Zabid. First he establisned his state at Mount Masar, in Northern Yaman, in the territory of Banu Hamdan. and then made Sanaa the Capital of his new state that extended throughout Yaman upto the port of Aden.

Ali's mission was on behalf of the Caliph Mustansir. At the zenith of his power in Yaman in 455 A. H., Egypt was at the lowest abyss of its existence. Ali sent his representative, Lamak bin Malik to Cairo to

convince and persuade the Imam to invite his master Ali to Egypt as a saviour and to restore order there. Lamak stayed with Dai Muayyad from 454 A. H. to 459. A. H. at the Darul Ilm. Many matters regarding the expansion of the Fatimid mission were discussed, but the Caliph did not give his approval for Ali's visit to Cairo. All the same Ali started on his journey, but on his way, during the pilgrimage at Mecca in 459 A. H., he was killed by his enemy Said, son of Najah, the defeated ruler of Zabid.

Lamak returned to Yaman with his mission unfulfilled, but he brought the Caliph's approval for the successor of Ali, his son Mukarram. He also brought instructions for sending out a mission to India.

(f) The Daawa in Western India : It was in 460 A. H. that the Dai Mukarram in Yaman sent a mission under Dai Abd Allah who first came to Cambay on the Gujrat coast of India. There he converted many Hindus of the lower castes. He is also supposed to have converted Raja Sindhraj Jaysingh Solankhi and his ministers Bharmal and Tarmal. Many stories are related about this doubtful historical period but it is certain that the Fatimid mission spread in this area at this particular time.

The Nizari tradition has it that the Pir Sat Gur Nur came to this area to preach Ismailism and died at Navsari.

In the letters of Mustansir to the Yamani Daawa various other dais are mentioned such as the Dai Marzaban and his son Ahmad who came to Western India.

There is also a story that in the Deccan there were two dais whose tombs are found at Aurangabad. They had gone to the Court of Mustansir, had taken instructions from Muayyad and returned to their native land to preach their new faith.

Because Yaman had remained loyal to the Fatimids even after the death of Mustansir, it naturally drifted away from the mission of Nizar in Persia. Since the Daawa in India originated from Yaman, most of the converts on the western coast of India, at that time, belonged not to the Nizari mission but to its rival, the Mustaalian mission of the Fatimids. Later, in 525 A. H. Yaman had become independent of Egypt, and had ceased to follow the last four Fatimid Caliphs. Soon after, the political power slipped out of the hands of the Ismailis there. However, the religious Daawa remained till 944 A.H. when its headquarters were shifted to Gujrat.

The local converts in India to this Yamani Fatimids mission, also known as the Mustaalian Tayyibi mission are called the Bohras and the local converts in India to the Nizari mission of Persia are the Khojas.

(g) The Daawa in Northern India : We had noted before that since the starting of the Fatimid mission, and before the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty, dais had come to Northern India. In the time of Mahdi the Dai Haytham was sent there. During the time of Muizz the dai Jalam bin Shayban established an Ismaili dynasty in Multan in 354 A. H. which was destroyed by the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazna in 401 A. H. In the period of Caliph Aziz, an Ismaili State was established in Mansura, on the present site of Dhalor, which existed between 401-416 A.H. but this too was destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazna while he was returning from his campaign at Somnath.

In the time af Mustansir the Ismaili cause was espoused by the *Sumra* dynasty which ruled from Thatta. In a Druze letter to the founder of the dynasty, the latter's name is given as Shaikh Sumar Rajibal, in other words the Sumra Rajpal, whose tomb can be possibly identified now at Thatta.

For three centuries the Sumras ruled Sind and preserved its independence in tact from the rulers of Delhi. In this independant state an Arab-Hindu culture flourished as opposed to the Turkish culture of the rest of the Muslim India.

When the great split in the Fatimid dynasty came between Nizar and Mustaali, it was difficult for the Sumras to decide as to which mission they should adhere to. So in their later history we find them adopting an independant non-conformist type of Ismailism of their own. When this dynasty was ultimately replaced by the Sammas of Sind, not only Ismailism gave way to Sunnism but also the provincial independence of Sind gave way to the control of Delhi.

The Death of Mustansir

Mustansir died in 487 A. H. at the advanced age of 67 years. He had come to the throne at the age of seven and ruled for 60 years , the longest reign that any ruler in Muslim history has enjoyed. By temperament he was gentle and generous and although there was so much dis-

order in his time, his person was never touched and no conspiracy ever tried to remove him. His last years were dominated by such powerful personalities as the Dai Muayyad and the Commander Badr al-Jamali, with whom he knew how to coexist and whose respect he knew how to earn and maintain.

. 10 .

MUSTAALI : THE NINTH FATIMID CALIPH (487-495 A. H.)

At the time of Mustansir's death, Badr al-Jamali's son, Afdal Shahinshah was in full control of the State and the Army. He helped the youngest son of Mustansir, Mustaali, to succeed to the Khilafat. It is said that Mustaali was either 21 or 8 years old. His elder brothers Nizar and Abd Allah contested the Khilafat. Abd Allah however withdrew from the contest but Nizar won over to his side the Governor of Alexandria, Aftagin, and a close associate of Afdal called Ibn Massal. With their help, Nizar invaded Cairo. After an initial defeat Afdal was able to defeat Nizar's forces. Ibn Massal deserted Nizar. Both Nizar and Aftagin who were arrested and put to death. We have noticed before that Hasan bin Sabbah continued Nizar's mission in Northern Persia. There he received a minor son of Nizar, whom he maintained as the Imam of Alamut. In Egypt a certain person called Muhammad claimed to be Nizar's son who was later crucified in 523 A. H.

The Beginning of the Crusades

It was in the fourth year of Mustaalis reign that the Crusaders invaded Syria in 490 A. H. The first Crusade came at a time when the Abbasid Empire was subjected to rival Saljuk Princes, and when the Fatimid state was divided between the forces of Nizar and Mustaali. Thus they could achieve some success. At first the Fatimids thought that the Crusaders would help them against the Saljuks. But soon they realised that the first Crusade was aimed more at the western areas of the Muslim world under the Fatimid control than at the eastern areas under the Abbasids.

Fatimids occupied Jerusalem but the Crusaders attacked it in 492 A. H. After heavy fighting Jerusalem surrendered to the Christians and Godfrey was declared the King there. The Crusaders also attacked another Fatimid possession in Syria, Ascalon, but there they had only a temporary success. In 495 A. H. the Crusaders took the town of Jaffa in Palestine from the Fatimids. The Crusdes were still to continue, but it was the Fatimids who bore the burnt of their first attacks.

Yaman

In the declining days of the Fatimids, as the Persian Ismailis had accepted the Nizari cause, so the Yamani Ismailis had accepted the Mustaalian mission. Here the Sulayhid dynasty ruled. Its founder Ali b. Muhammad had died and his son Mukarram had succeeded. But Mukarram was an invalid and died in 477 A. H., succeeded by his miner son, Ali. In the time of Mukarram and his son, it was the wife of Mukarram, Sayyida Arwa who ruled Yaman and is popularly known as Hurrat al-Malika. She was raised to the position of Hujja in the Fatimid religious hierarchy.

Mustaali's Death

At the age of 26 or 28 Mustaali died in 495 A. H. He had not made any personal contribution to the Fatimid rule which was completely in the hands of his Wazir Afdal. Mustaali was throughout restricted to the palace, and on his death his son Amir was raised to the throne by Afdal.

. 11 .

AMIR : THE TENTH FATIMID CALIPH (495-524 A. H.)

Amir was born in 490 A. H. and came to the throne at the age of five in 495 A. H. with the help of the Wazir Afdal Shahinshah. He is accepted as the twentieth Imam by the Tayyibi Daawa, but was rejected by the Nizaris. He later wrote a book called *Hidayat al-Amiriya* in which he defended his and his father's claims to be the rightful Imams as against the claims of Nizar and his descendants.

The Crusades Continue

The main happenings of the time were connected with the crusades which had succeeded in Palestine and were now threatening Egypt. Afdal sent his son on a campaign against the Crusaders. Jerusalem was for the time being occupied by the Fatimid forces and the Christian king of Jerusalem had to go in hiding. The Fatimids also took Ramla and entered into an alliance with Tughtegin, the Saljuk Governor of Damascus.

The Crusaders reacted by occupying Tripoli, destroying its famous college and library and torturing the prisoners fallen to them. They took Beirut and Sidon and also invaded Egypt. But their king, Baldwin died on the Egyptian border and they had to withdraw. Now the Crusaders had discontinued the Fatimid currency in Palestine and Syria and were beginning to mint their own coins. The only possessions left to the Fatimids in Palestine were Ramla, Tyre and Ascalon.

Afdal Shahinshah

The early life of the Wazir Afdal is obscured by the career of his father Badr al-Jamali. Afdal was responsible for the succession of

Mustaali and then of Amir. As Amir was a minor, the entire power in the state was in the hands of Afdal. But as the Caliph grew up, he managed to assert the independence of the Daawa organisation under the Dai Abul Barakat who is known for his work, the *Majalis*, a collection of sixty lectures. However as Afdal rejected the influence of the Daawa, he closed down its headquarters, the Dar-al-Ilm.

The Caliph and his Dai, on the advice of the Caliph's uncle Abdul Majid, who later became the Caliph Hafiz, began to conspire for the death of Afdal with the help of Afdal's associate Ibn al-Bataihi.

Afdal was attacked and killed in 515 A. H. His rule, although dictatorial, was one of peace of success against the Crusaders and of useful constructive work at home. He had organised a good system of revenue, and encouraged agriculture by building many canals for irrigation. He had built an observatory at the Mount Muqattam, had built a mosque named Jamia ar-Rasad and had commenced the construction of another mosque, Jamia al-Fil.

In fact the Armenian House of Badr al-Jamali who ruled the Fatimid Empire from 466 to 515 A. H.—almost half a century—established order and peace, defended the Empire against its enemies, restored security and encouraged industry, commerce, arts, architecture and public works.

The Wazir al-Mamun Ibn al-Bataihi

Since Ibn al-Bataihi had helped the Caliph in the removal of Afdal, he was appointed the next Wazir and given the title of Mamun, i.e. the Trusted One. He was harsh and cruel, though intelligent and efficient and a patron of arts and literature. He instituted the census of the Empire and appointed women intelligence officers. He wrote a history of the Fatimids called *Tarikh al-Mamun*. Many works of science and politics were written by scholars for him. One famous work is *Kitab al-Ishara* by Ibn as-Sayrafi about the biographics of the Wazirs of Egypt. It is an invaluable historical source on Egyptian administration. Ibn al Bataihi built the mosque, Jamia al-Aqmar, and completed Jamia al-Fil. Dar al-Ilm, the headquarters of the Daawa had been previously closed down by Afdal as it was the centre of conspiracy againsf him. With Afdal's death it was reopened. Again it became the centre of conspiracy against Ibn al-Bataihi. So he closed it now for the second time. The Caliph had come to know that Ibn al-Bataihi was plotting to remove him and to install on the Fatimid throne a son of Nizar called Muhammad who was then residing in Yaman.

The Caliph acted quickly. He got his wazir arrested and killed and also got Nizar's son arrested and executed in 523 A. H. Now he did not appoint any Wazir but ruled the Empire himself directly.

The Caliph His Own Wazir

After the death of Ibn al-Bataihi the Caliph ruled with the advice of a few administrators and left the finance of the state in the hands of a Christian monk.

Amir now became more and more unpopular, for he could not manage the administration of the State. Once while he was on his way to a pleasure resort he had built on the island of Roda, he was ambushed by a group of Nizari *fidais* and was killed. He died at the age of 34, in 524 A. H., having ruled for 29 years.

The question of succession after him is discussed in the next chapter. He was followed in the Fatimid Caliphate by his uncle Abdul Majid Hafiz.

. 12 .

THE TAYYIBI DAAWA

(a) Imam Tayyib : On the death of Amir, his uncle Hafiz had succeeded to the Fatimid throne because it was believed that Amir did not have any male child. However, the story of the birth of a female child is malicious and contrary to the facts. The historian Muqrizi holds that a son called Tayyib was born before Amir's death. He was only two and a half years of age and was put under the guardianship of a Dai called Ibn Madyan and four other Dais who constituted a Council of Guardianship. The title of the next ruler Hafiz (protector) itself suggests that he was appointed from the very beginning as one of the guardians for the already existing minor Imam. However, when Hafiz took charge of the government he saw to it that the claims of Tayyib were set aside and his own Caliphate ccnfirmed. In this confusion Abu Ali, the son of Afdal Shahinshah, with the support of the army and the court manouvered to get the Wazirate and to reject the claims of both Hafiz and Tayyib. He now declared himself in favour of the expected Imam of the *Ithna-Asharis*. But he died soon after in 526 A. H. and Hafiz could resume his rule.

Under these circumstances the guardians of Tayyib hid the minor Imam in a mosque called Masjid ar-Rahma. Maqrizi says that Tayyib was arrested and killed. The followers of and believers in the Tayyibi cause hold that Tayyib was hidden and his line exists even today in hiding. They, like the Ithhna Asharis, also developed a belief in a coming Imam who will be the *Qaim al-Qiyama.*

(b) Yaman: In Yaman after the death of the Dai-ruler, Ali bin Muhammad as-Sulayhi, his son Mukarram ruled. He died in 477 A.H. His wife Sayyida Arwa then began to govern Yaman on behalf of her and Mukarram's minor son, Ali Abd al-Mustansir. When he too died, Sayyida Arwa ruled in her own right adopting the title of Hujja. For a time she

supported the Fatimid dynasty upto Amir as opposed to the Nizaris of Persia. But when the conflict arose in Egypt between the claims of the Fatimid Caliph Hafiz and the minor Imam Tayyib, she chose to support the latter. Thus by accepting the Tayyibi cause she made Yaman independent of the Fatimids of Egypt. Again by accepting the cause of a hidden Imam, who may or may not actually exist, she also became the head of the religious organisation of the Tayyibi Mustaalian community.

Sayyida Arwa ruled with the help of Amir Saba and Amir Sulayman till their deaths in the years 491 and 492 A.H., respectively. She was then assisted by Amir Mufaddal whose heroic defence of her regime has become famous. He died in 504 A. H. The Fatimid Caliph, Amir, sent a general Najib ad-Dawla from Egypt to take charge of the situation in Yaman but Queen Arwa succeeded in forcing him to withdraw. She ruled her kingdom efficiently with the advice of her step-brother, al-Khattab al-Hamdani, who was a prolific writer and poet as well as a warrior. He died in 533 A. H.

In religious matters, the Queen was first advised by Dai Lamak bin Malik till 510 A. H., when he died. His place was taken by his son the Dai Yahya bin Lamak, who also died soon after in 520 A. H. He was followed by the Dai Dhuayb al-Wadii during whose term in 524 A. H. Yaman became independent of Egypt, when the Caliph Amir died and the Yamani Dai refused to accept his successor Hafiz. The new Dai now established in Yaman the headquarters of the religious organisation in favour of Imam Tayyib and his successors.

Since the Western coast of India was under the influence of Yaman, the Ismailis there too accepted the Tayyibi Daawa.

After the death of Queen Arwa in 531 A. H. the political power in Yaman slipped away from the hands of the Ismailis. But they continued to maintain their religious mission until 944 A. H. when because of persecution they had to shift the headquarters of their Daawa to the Gujrat province of India. However, a small Ismaili minority still exists in the northern mountains of Yaman and in the territory of Banu Hamdan. In Yaman the rule of the Dai-Kings was over. Now both in Yaman and in India, it were the Dai-authors who produced a vast amount of literature which is still preserved in the libraries of those territories, and which constitutes a distinct Ismaili culture.

. 13 .

HAFIZ : THE ELEVENTH FATIMID CALIPH (524-544 A. H.)

Abd al-Majid Hafiz was born in 467 A. H. On Amir's death in 524 A. H., he succeeded as a guardian of Imam Tayyib having as his Wazir, Hizbar al-Mulk and adopting the title of Hafiz. Soon, however, he assumed the Caliphate.

The Court and the Army supported Abu Ali Ahmad, the son of Afdal Shahinshah, for the Wazirate. The Caliph had to remove Hizbar al-Mulk from the Wazirate and appoint in his place Abu Ali. Immediately on assuming office, Abu Ali introduced a strange phenomenon in Fatimid history by announcing the Ithna Ashari religion as the official creed of the State. This was against the very character of the Fatimid rule and did not conform to the Ismaili claims of either the Nizari, the Tayyibi or the Hafizi Daawa. He even went to the extent of imprisoning the Caliph. The court reacted and demanded his freedom. On being released Hafiz succeeded in having Abu Ali assassinated by an Armenian slave called Yanis, who became the next wazir.

Yanis in his own turn became so powerful that Hafiz got him poisoned in 526 A. H. Hafiz then ruled for sometime without a wazir.

He had nominated his eldest son Sulayman to succeed him but he died. So he nominated next his second son Husayn. However, his third son Hasan was ambitious for the office of Caliphate. There were now two sections of the Army that came into an open conflict supporting the rival claims of Husayn or Hasan. The local troops in Egypt called the Rayhaniya were for a very long time discriminated against by the rulers who favoured the Armenian troops called the Juyushiya. The Armenians were supporting Husayn and the local troops were for Hasan. For a

time the Rayhaniya succeeded and they put up Hasan as the rival Caliph. But the Juyushiya finally forced the caliph Hafiz to have Hasan killed, and the Caliph had to comply.

The Armenian faction of the Army upon emerging victorious put up an Armenian Christian called Bahram as the Wazir who was even given the title of Sayful-Islam, i.e., the Sword of Islam. He became so unpopular that he had to be deposed and he passed his last days in a monastery.

The Caliph then appointed Ridwan as his Wazir in 532 A. H. He adopted the title of al-Malik al-Afdal i.e., the Excellent King, and is said to have been the first wazir in the Fatimid history to adopt the title of "King". Moreover, Ridwan being a Sunni by faith began to introduce all such laws as differed from the traditional Ismaili laws of the Fatimid State. He was arrested and confined to prison for ten years. In 543 A.H. he succeeded in family breaking through and organising a revolt. Although he was defeated by the Negro troops of the Caliph and was brutally killed, he became a popular symbol of bravery and resistance.

The Caliph then appointed another Wazir, Usama bin Munqidh, in 538 A. H. He had earned renown in the early wars of the Crusades, but in Egypt he played an evil role which he had described frankly in his autobiography, *Kitab al Iatibar*.

The Second Crusade

In the first Crusade it was the Fatimids who first resisted the invaders. The Christian armies, however, succeeded in establishing a few small enclaves in Syria. Then the second Crusade started in about 542 A. H. by the Christian attack on Damascus and Jerusalem. However, now a new power had arisen in Syria, that of the Zangid Dynasty led by Nuruddin. Since the Crusaders met with difficulties in Syria, they increased their pressure on the western territories of the Fatimids. Hence Roger II, Ruler of Sicily, attacked northern Africa in 539 A. H. occupied Barsa, Tripoli and Madhiya and marched upto Alexandria, where he was finally halted by the Fatimid troops.

In any case much confusion had been created in Egypt, and taking advantage of the foreign invasion, different factions in the Fatimid Army were again preparing for a clash.

Hafiz died in 544 A. H., after a liberal rule of 20 years, at the age of 76. His Caliphate was marked with civil war in Egypt and the Crusades from outside; with the complete withdrawal of Ismaili support and the loss of Yaman and finally with the challenge of Ithna Asharism under Wazir Abu Ali Ahmad and of Sunnism under Wazir Ridwan.

. 14 .

ZAFIR : THE TWELFTH FATIMID CALIPH (544-549 A. H.)

Just before his death, Hafiz had nominated his youngest son Ismail to succeed him. Ismail was born in 527 A. H. and at the time of his accession he was only Sixteen. He adopted the title of Zafir, but instead of devoting himself to the administration, he passed his life in intrigues and in the company of his concubines.

Before he died, Hafiz had removed Usama bin Munqidh from the Wazirate and in his place appointed Ibn Massal who continued to hold office in the time of Zafir. But the Governor of Alexandria,Ibn as-Sallar, marched on Cairo, got Ibn Massal killed and assumed the Wazirate himself. He checked the Caliph's bodyguards, tried to eliminate the influence of Ismailism and encouraged the Sunni Shafii School of Law. The Caliph now began to plot his murder.

Murder and Counter-murder

Ibn Sallar had a step-son, Abbas who had become the Commander of the Army. Abbas had a son Nasir who was a companion of the Caliph, even in love. The Caliph used Nasir to conspire against his grandfather. Amir Usama joined in the conspiracy. Nasir's father Abbas was taken into confidence on the promise of the Wazirate. He pretended to go on a campaign in Syria but waited at the borders of Egypt. In the meantime Nasir attacked Ibn Sallar in his harem and killed him in Muharram 540 A. H. Abbas immediately returned to Cairo and became the Wazir.

When the news of Ibn Sallar's murder began to be known the Caliph, wanting to make Abbas the scapegoat, began to plot his murder as well. Again he asked his companion Nasir to kill his father Abbas.

But this time Nasir, Abbas and Amir Usama got together to have the Caliph removed. Nasir made an appointment of pleasure with the Caliph and asked him to bring very few guards. When Zafir came unsuspecting he was ambushed and killed in Muharram 549 A. H. All his guards were also put to death. Only a Negro slave escaped to tell the story later on. The body of Zafir was buried in the same house where he was to meet Nasir.

Now the Wazir Abbas rushed to the Court, pretended to request an audience with the Caliph and not finding him called the Caliph's two brothers Jibrail and Yusuf, and got them killed on the charge that they had murdered the Caliph. Then he raised a five year old son of Zafir on shoulder, and demanded the oath of allegiance from the Court for him. Such a shout was raised by Abbas's men at this time that the child got frightened and ever afterwards he remained subject to fits of trembling.

Zafir perished at the age of 22. He is known for the construction of a mosque, called Jamia Zafiri, which still exists in Cairo.

. 15 .

FAIZ : THE THIRTEENTH FATIMID CALIPH (549-555 A. H.)

The five year old son of the last Caliph was put upon the throne by Wazir Abbas in 549 A.H. The entire power in the state was now in the hands of the Wazir. The facts and details of Zafir's murder soon became common knowledge both with the Amirs of the Court as well as with the public generally. The Amirs then sent a letter to Talaia bin Ruzzik, the Armenian Governor of a small town in Upper Egypt, requesting him to come to Cairo. The ladies of the Court also made a similar request by sending flocks of their hair as a sign of distress. Ibn Ruzzik was not an important person but was known for his integrity and character. He gathered his Armenian troops and marched on to Cairo where he was given an enthusiastic reception by the court and the populace.

Wazir Abbas, along with his son Nasir and the evil genius Usama fled to Syria. Ibn Ruzzik took complete charge of the Government, uncovered the body of the late Caliph and gave it a proper burial at the royal cemetery at Qarafa.

The Caliph's sister wrote to the Frankish rulers of Ascalon to arrest Abbas, Nasir and Usama. The first two were arrested, sent to Egypt and there put to death. Usama, the prime instigator of all the mischief, however, escaped.

Crusaders Repulsed

One great desire of Ibn Ruzzik was to form a strong joint front with Nuruddin's Turks against Crusaders. He sent the Commander Dirgham to fight the Crusaders from land as well as sea and stop their further advance. By his victory at Gaza in 553 A. H. he could success-

fully halt the Frankish invasion of Egypt. He sent a special embassy, many gifts and his own poems to Nuruddin at Damascus in 549 A.H., asking him to enter into a full-fledged alliance against the Crusaders. Nuruddin hesitated, as the Fatimids had hesitated before when he had made an offer. If he would have made an alliance at this time, probably the the Crusades would have ended sooner and also the Fatimid dynasty would have been saved. But this was not to be.

Whilst in an epileptic fit, the Caliph Faiz died in Rajab, 555 A. H. at the age of eleven. The Wazir Ibn Quzzik now proceeded to choose a new Caliph.

. 16 .

ADID : THE LAST FATIMID CALIPH (555-567 A. H.)

(a) **Talaia Ibn Ruzzik :** We have seen how Ibn Ruzzik came to the help of the Fatimid Khilafat against the misdeeds of the previous Wazir, Abbas. When Faiz died, Ibn Ruzzik wanted to instal an elderly person as the Caliph, but on the advice of the Court, he chose a nine-year old son of Yusuf, one of the murdered brothers of Zafir, called Abu Muhammad, who adopted the title of Adid, meaning "the Strong Arm of Faith", although all the strength rested with Ruzzik. Adid was born in 546 A. H. and came to the Fatimid throne in 555 A. H.

Ibn Ruzzik was an honest and well-meaning ruler, who realised that the Crusaders were the main enemies and he wanted to defend Egypt against them. But his strict conduct in administration aroused the jealousy of the Court.

Ibn Ruzzik is remembered for the building of the Mashhad of Imam Husayn in Cairo. We know that the head of Imam Husayn was buried in Jerusalem where Badr al-Jamali had erected a mausoleum in 491 A H. But it was in danger of being desecrated by the Crusaders; so Ibn Ruzzik transferred the remains of the tomb to Cairo and buried these in the Royal Cemetery at Qarafa. Here a Mashhad and a mosque were built. Even today the mosque of Imam Husayn in Cairo is a centre of pilgrimage.

When Adid grew up Ibn Ruzzik married him to his own daughter. But the Caliph's aunt was so jealous that she contrived to have Ibn Ruzzik fatally attacked. When the Caliph came to visit the wounded Wazir at his death-bed, Ibn Ruzzik demanded that the Caliph's aunt

should be executed immediately and that his son Ruzzik should be appointed as the next Wazir. This was done and Ibn Ruzzik breathed his last in 566 A. H.

Ibn Ruzzik was an Ithna-Ashari by faith, but had served the Fatimid Caliphate very loyally. He was the last great wazir and patriot. He patronised art and literature Two volumes of his poems still exist and bear witness to his noble ideas, admirable tastes and a chaste style.

(b) Ruzzik, Shawar and Dirgham : As soon as Ruzzik became the Wazir he had to contend with Shawar, the Governor of Upper Egypt. Ruzzik's father had advised him to be careful of Shawar as he was an ambitious and unscrupulous man. However Ruzzik hastily and rashly deposed Shawar from the Governorship, and the latter got an excuse to march on Cairo. Ruzzik was killed in 558 A. H. and Shawar took over the administration. However, the trusted general of Ruzzik, Dirgham, succeeded in mobilising both the Court and the Army against Shawar who then had to escape to Syria. Dirgham thereupon became the next Wazir.

(c) Shawar in Syria : It was in Syria that the Crusaders were most active and at last a Muslim dynasty had arisen there, that of the Zangids, who could defend Islam against them. The Zangid leader Nuruddin had been approached by the Fatimids earlier for an alliance against the Crusaders, but he had then hesitaed. Now he was again approached by Shawar with a still better offer, that of the complete subjugation of Egypt to Nuruddin's control which may help him to fight the Crusaders more effectively. Shawar agreed to be a Wazir in Egypt on behalf of Nuruddin, if he was helped against the Fatimid Khalifat and the wazir Dirgham. Nuruddin agreed. He equipped a large Turkish army under his General Shirkuh and the latter's nephew Salahuddin bin Ayyub to invade Egypt and he sent Shawar along with them as a guide and adviser.

(d) Dirgham in Egypt : The Fatimids had been paying a regular tribute to the Franks for sometime. Dirgham made the mistake of discontinuing this tribute. As a result for this, Amalric, the Frankish King of Jerusalem, invaded Egypt in 560 A. H. Fortunately, it was the

time for the flooding of the Nile. Dirgham ordered the dykes to be cut and the country was soon under water. This prevented the advance of the Crusaders in Egypt. They withdrew, satisfied with the promise of a small token tribute.

But soon after, another invasion was launched by the Turks led by Shirkuh and Salahuddin. Dirgham defended the Capital heroically, but was so short of funds that he made another mistake of borrowing from the religious endowments (Waqfs) which angered the population. For hours Dirgham stood before the palace of the Caliph asking for help, but the Caliph was in no position to give any assistance. Dirgham's army kept on deserting him till only 30 men were left. A crowd attacked them and Dirgham was killed. The sincere supporters of the State had all perished and only opportunists like Shawar remained.

(e) **Shawar's Betrayal** : Shawar was installed as the Wazir by Shirkuh and Salahuddin, but true to his nature he now betrayed his helpers as he had betrayed the Caliph before. He negotiated with the Franks, allowed them to enter Egypt, and became independent of Nuruddin's authority. Shirkuh and Salahuddin had to withdraw to Syria. Shawar became the undisputed master of Egypt while the Franks made some advance in his domain.

Shirkuh kept on persuading his master Nuruddin to allow him to conquer Egypt. Upto now Nuruddin had checked Shirkuh, but now he gave in to his wishes as well as to the wishes of the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad. A large army and 2,300 horsemen was now placed under the command of Shirkuh and Salahuddin, and ordered to proceed to Egypt.

(f) **The Turks and the Franks in Egypt** : The Turkish invasion began in the middle of 562 A. H. Again Shawar asked the Franks to enter Egypt. The Turks reached Egypt first. They crossed the Nile and took up position on its western bank. The Franks followed and took up a position on the eastern bank of the Nile. Both the armies then proceeded southwards till the Turks encamped at Giza and the Franks at Fustat.

(g) **Amalric in the Fatimid Court** : Amalric, the Frankish King, was not satisfied with the promises of Shawar, and wanted to meet the Caliph Adid and personally negotiate an alliance with him. Amalric's visit to the Fatimid Court has been reported by the historian William of Tyre most vividly. Amalric was very impressed with the splendours of the

Fatimid court, even in the days of its decline. A treaty was signed by both the sides, according to which the Franks would receive a large payment in return for their expelling the Turks from Egypt.

(h) Turkish Victory Nullified by Shawar: The Franks now attempted to cross the river but because of the heroic resistance by Shirkuh's force they could not do so. Again Salahuddin staged a diversion seattering the Frankish troops, so that Shirkuh could achieve a victory in his battle at Baban. Salahuddin went northwards and occupied Alexandria. Shirkuh held Upper Egypt in the south. Both of them wanted to proceed towards Cairo but were hesitant because of the Frankish Army. Then Shawar exploited the situation by playing the Turks and Franks against one another and ultimately arranging for the withdrawal of both the parties from Egypt.

(i) The Frankish Invansion of Egypt in 564 A. H. : The Frankish troops under Amalric, smarting under the deception of Shawar returned to invade Egypt in 564 A. H. and proceeded swiftly towards Cairo. In order to delay their occupation of the Capital, Shawar agreed to pay a large sum to Amalric and also destroyed the town of Fustat by setting fire to it. Thus by the unscrupulous behaviour of Shawar the accumulated heritage of centuries of civilization was destroyed and the only thing that remained at Fustat were the ruins of the mosque of Amr Ibn al-As and a few other buildings.

In the meantime, Shawar had again negotiated with Nuruddin in Syria. This time the Caliph Adid had also written to him requesting for help, and the ladies of the court had sent flocks of their hair as a sign of distress. Nuruddin responded by sending again a large army under Shirkuh and Salahuddin.

The Turkish army descended swiftly upon Cairo and took the Franks by surprise. The latter did not wait to collect the amount promised by Shawar but withdrew immediately to Palestine.

(j) Shirkuh Replaces Shawar : Egypt had been saved from the Frankish invesion. Now Shirkuh entered the Fatimid Capital and was given a hero's welcome. Shawar was arrested by Shirkuh, after he had again tried to intrigue against the presence of the Turkish forces, and was beheaded. The Caliph Adid appointed Shirkuh as his wazir and gave him the title, "al-Malik al-Mansur". The entire

civil and military administration of the Fatimid state now came under his control. Though Shirkuh recognised the sovereignty of his master Nuruddin in Syria, he also took an oath of allegiance to the Fatimid Caliph and did not discontinue his Khutba. The Daawa remained nominally under the Dai Jalis bin Abd al-Qawi.

Shirkuh died two months after his victory and the wazirate passed to his nephew Salahuddin.

(k) Salahuddin, the Last Wazir of the Fatimids: On Shirkuh's death disputes arose among his lieutenants for the succession to the wazirate and the matter was then left to the Caliph Adid himself for decision. The Caliph chose Salahuddin, knowing full well that the days of the Fatimid Caliphate were numbered; but he preferred Salahuddin to others because of his character, chivalry and his heroism in defending the Muslim territories against the Crusaders.

Salahuddin too recognised both the authority of the Fatimid Caliph and the suzerainty of his master Nuruddin in Syria. When his father Ayyub visited Cairo, Salahuddin was prepared to resign his wazirate in his favour, but his father asked him to continue in his office.

THE END

After the revolt against Salahuddin led by the Amir Muataman ad-Dawla, Salahuddin was under constant pressure from both the Zangid ruler of Syria, Nuruddin, and the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, to discontinue the Fatimid Khutba in Egypt. For a long time Salahuddin hesitated but at last he asked a Persian Amir to read the Khutba for the Abbasid Caliph on a Friday in Muharram 567 A. H. This was the formal end of the Fatimid Caliphate.

The Caliph Adid was seriously ill at that time, and Salahuddin, not to hurt his feelings, spared him the news of the end of his rule. Adid died on the 10th of Muharram, 567 A. H. having ruled for 12 years, and died unaware of the denoucement.

Salahuddin then took measures to prevent the further continuance of the Fatimid Royal Family. He segregated their men and women and saw to it that as fe wclaimants to the Fatimid throne arose from it as possible. Despite this a son of Adid called Daud rose in revolt in 569 A. H. His movement was suppressed and he was killed. A grandson of Adid named Muhammad bin Abd Allah declared himself as Mahdi in the Maghrib, but was taken prisoner and crucified.

In the otherwise chivalrous and broad-minded rule of Salahuddin there is one black spot. At Cairo there was a great library containing a rich treasure of books on all subjects. It was the embodiment of the accumulated culture and civilisation of centuries. Salahuddin unfortunately appointed as its librarian, a fanatic Qadi Abd ar-Rahim who had most of the books burnt on the ground that they were tainted with Ismailism. The historian Maqrizi reports that from the leather covers of Ismaili manuscripts shoes were made as an insult to the contents of those books. Had it not been for the transfer of a large part of Ismaili literature by Dai Lamak to Yaman, in the time of Mustansir, we might have lost for ever a great treasure of learning, refinement and culture.

Salahuddin now began to divest the caliphate of its religious halo. The old Dar ul-Ilm which had been officially discontinued by Ibn al-Bataihi, functioned unofficially under various names such as Dar ul-Mauna and Dar ul-Marifa. He finally closed down such academies and instead opened Madrasas for the teaching of the Shafii and Maliki orthodox Sunni law.

The Caliph Adid saw this happening but did not raise any objection. However the Shii religious dignitaries took the help of Negro troops in starting a revolt against Salahuddin under the leadership of the Amir Muataman ad-Dawla. By crushing this revolt, Salahuddin got an opportunity not only of removing all Shii influence from Egypt but of preparing the end of the Fatimid rule. The Caliph was spared as he was not implicated in the plot but he realised full well that the end of his caliphate was near.

. 17 .

RETROSPECT

The Causes of the Decline of the Fatimid Caliphate

"The Fatimid dynasty fell without being the object of more than private comment, and Egypt acquised in the change without discussion or even taking any particular notice". These words of O'Leary are in accord with the opinion of many writers who believe that the Fatimids had actually very little support among the people.

But this is an erroneous view. We have seen that when Salah-uddin had become the last Wazir of the Fatimids, a large section of the people, the Court and the Army realised that there was a danger of the discontinuance of the Fatimid rule. Therefore, they supported a violent revolt led by Amir Muataman ad-Dawla. It was with difficulty that the revolt was finally crushed. This certainly was much "more than a private comment."

(i) The main cause of the Fatimid decline was the withdrawal of the support of Ismailism from the Caliphate. This had come much before the end of the Fatimid rule. On the death of Mustansir in 487 A. H. a large section which had supported the Fatimids had separated as the Nizari mission which had established itself at Alamut in Northern Persia.

After the death of Amir in 524 A. H. another big section of the supporters of the Fatimids had separated as the Tayyibi mission which was espoused by the Sulayhid dynasty in Yaman.

The Ismaili enclaves elsewhere in the world, as for example in Northern and Western India, supported either the Nizari or the Tayyibi mission and became completely independent of the Fatimids of Egypt,

thus destroying much of the latter's political connections and causing a decline in their revenue.

(ii) Sometimes it is pointed out that the events of the time of the Caliph Hakim were mainly responsible for the Fatimid decline. It is said that the Caliph was insane, and so many executions took place during his reign that a large part of the civil and military leadership of the Fatimid state had been removed. It may be correct to say that the decline began with Hakim, but the accusations against the Caliph are highly exaggerated.

(iii) In the time of the Caliph Mustansir, Egypt passed through almost seven years of what is called the *Shiddat al-Uzma* i. e., the Great Calamity. During these years there were many bad Niles resulting in continuous famine and plague and the situation was aggravated by the ravages of the adventurer, Nasir ad-Dawla. The conditions were not restored to normalcy till the advent of Badr al-Jamali, which cost the Fatimid Caliph his political independence. From now onward the Caliph was no longer free to act as he wished.

(iv) During the time of the Caliph Aziz, Turkish guards were introduced to balance and check the influence of the Berber Maghribi guards. This was as much an unfortunate step as the introduction of Turkish guards in the Abbasid Caliphate by Muatasim. For a time the Turks were useful, but they brought the Caliphate gradually under their control and paralysed its activities. One mistake led to another and after the Turks followed other military elements from outside like Negro troops from Sudan and the Armenian troops of Badr al-Jamali. In the time of the last Fatimid Caliphs all these factions came into a terrible conflict.

(v) In the early Fatimid period there was no trade rivalry with the Abbasids, but with the loss of the Maghrib and the Mediterranian islands, the Fatimids concentrated on the Eastern trade in rivalry with the Abbasids. The political and religious hostility between the two Caliphates was now aggravated by their commercial competition and finally resulted in a military conflict between the two. It was in the time of Mustansir that the Fatimid troops led by Basasiri occupied Baghdad, the Abbasid Capital, in 450 A. H. Although this occupation lasted only for a year, it provoked so much opposition, that ever afterwards the Saljukid Turkish power under the Abbasids waged a determined struggle for the overthrow of the Fatimid Caliphate. The Fatimids could never recover from the financial losses they had suffered because of their campaign against Baghdad.

(vi) During the time of the last Caliphs the Ismaili character of the Fatimid rule was subverted by the introduction of Ithna Ashari religion by the Wazir Abu Ali Ahmad, son of Afdal Shahinshah and the Wazir Ibn Ruzzik. In the time of the Wazir Ridwan, for a short time Sunnism was declared the official creed. The Fatimid dynasty could have sustained itself with the support of the Daawa or their religious mission, but it was too late because this mission had already shifted its loyalty from the Fatimids to either the Nizari or the Tayyibi Cause. The headquarters of the Daawa, the Dar al-Ilm had been closed down many times by the Wazirs in order to check its support to the Caliphs.

(vii) During the time of the Caliphs Zafir and Faiz, a sordid drama of murder and intrigue was enacted when the Amir Usama conspired with the Caliph to have the Wazir Ibn Sallar murdered and his grandson Nasir to have the Caliph killed.

(viii) The final cause of the Fatimid downfall was the adventurous intrigues of the Wazir Shawar. It was he who invited both the Crusaders and the Zangid Turkish rulers of Syria to invade Egypt. Had it not been for him, the final victory of Shirkuh and Salahuddin would not have been possible.

The Fatimid dynasty went through many periods of rise and fall. In the time of Muizz, Hakim and Mustansir the Fatimid rule rose to successive heights of glory, but after these caliphs it declined staedily. For this reason it is difficult to attribute the causes of its downfall to one particular period, or to put the responsibility for it on one particular Caliph Wazir, or enemy.

The Place of the Fatimids in History

The Fatimid dynasty ruled only for 270 years in the Maghrib and Egypt. But its influence was so great that it cannot be described as one of the petty dynasties in the time of the Eastern Caliphate. It was the Fatimids who for the first time destroyed the myth that there could only be one Caliphate in the Muslim world. In fact by establishing a rival Caliphate to the Abbasids they set an example for the establishment of a third Caliphate, that of the Umayyads of Spain.

In the history of Egypt, the Fatimid period is considered its golden age, because since after the Pharaonic times Egypt was for the first time politically independent. Philip Hitti remarks: "Politically the Fatimid

period marks a new epoch in the history of the land, which for the first time since Pharaonic days had a completely sovereign power full of vitality and founded on a religious basis."

Although the Fatimids had a large empire, in the time of Muizz extending mainly towards the West and in the time of Mustansir extending mainly towards the East, their cultural heritage survives only in Egypt and in some scattered areas outside. The reason for this is that the Fatimids depended on a peculiar type of religious ideology and organisation which did not believe in mass conversion but emphasised the rule of a few initiated and organised leaders over the rest of the people. Ismailism which upheld the Fatimid dynasty was more a philosophical and intellectual movement than a mass religion. This explains its efficiency while the Fatimid rule lasted, and it also explains its complete disappearance from Egypt after the Fatimid rule had ended. It was only in small scattered communities outside the Fatimid empire that Ismailism flourished as a religion for its self-preservation, and where it exists even today.

For sometimes it was believed that the Fatimids had not left behind a great literature, but this was a mistake arising out of the fact that the Fatimid literature was for many centuries buried in the far away libraries of Yaman and India. It was only in the last 50 years that this literature has been discovered and has brought to light a rich treasure of literary achievements of the Fatimid period. This literature is mainly the work of the Dais who, besides being religious missionaries, were well-informed of the sciences of the time.

In an earlier chapter we have noticed the works of poets like Ibn Hani and Prince Tamim in the time of Muizz. We have also noticed the great juristic contributions of the Qadin-Nuaman and his family. We have described before, the philosophical works of the Persian Dais of the Fatimids like Nasafi, Razi and Sijistani in the time of Mahdi, of Kirmani in the time of Hakim and of Muayyad and Nasir-i-Khusraw in the time of Mustansir.

The Caliphate of Hakim was productive of many a scientific work. We have read before about the great astronomer Ali bin Yunus and the celebrated physicist and specialist in optics Ibn al-Haytham known in Europe as Alhazen. These great scientists produced more than a hundred works on various branches of scientific learning. In the time of Muizz lived a great historian called Ibn Salama al-Qudai, and in the time of Mustansir flourished a noble linguist and grammarian Ibn Babshad.

The Fatimid period is marked for its remarkable tolerance towards the religious minorities. Except in the time of Hakim, the Christians and the Jews were never persecuted and even in Hakim's time, tolerance returned at the end of his caliphate. Almost the entire financial and revenue administration remained in the hands of Jewish and Christian officials throughout the Fatimid period. From these communities many Wazirs were appointed, the most eminent of them being the Wazir Yaaqub bin Killis who was, however, converted from Judaism to Islam. Although the Fatimid state was an Ismaili one, at no time was the Sunni population either subjected to mass conversion or to persecution. In the time of Hakim a famous Sunni theologian Abu Bakr al-Antaki was appointed as the Head of the Maliki rite at the Azhar. From the time of Caliph Zahir, the Shafii Sunni school was gradually more preferred than the Maliki in official recognition. During the Fatimid period we do not find any large scale sectarian rioting and warfare such as in the Eastern Caliphate. As in Iran, we do not find an attempt by the rulers to convert the people outright to a Shii faith.

In keeping with the Ismaili doctrine of Taalim, i.e. the doctrine of the Imam being the Teacher of the Age, much emphasis was laid on the establishment of educational institutions and libraries. When the Fatimids were ruling from Mansuria, a library was built there to celebrate the victory over the rebel leader Abu Yazid. When in the time of Muizz, Jawhar conquered Egypt and built the town of Cairo, he raised a Royal Library which accomodated 200,000 books. There were, in it, 24,000 illuminated Qurans, such precious manuscripts as an autograph copy of the History of Tabari and many books in the hand of the famous calligrapher Ibn Muqla. During Mustansir's reign the Turkish troops of Nasir ad-Dawla destroyed wantonly a large part of the library, but when on the coming of Badr al-Jamali order was restored, the caliph dedicated another library to his success. At the time of the entry of Salahuddin in Egypt, "it still housed over a 100,000 volumes" says Hitti, "some of which together with other treasures were distributed among his men."

The commencement of a Uuiversity at Azhar by the Caliph Aziz and the institution of Dar al-Ilm established in 395 A. H. by Hakim, kept the torch of learning aflame and its effects continued to be felt much after the Fatimid rule was abolished. The Dar al-Ilm was particulary the centre of scientific research as well as of religious mission and it was finally closed down by Salahuddin.

"The prosperity which the country enjoyed", says Hitti, "under the first two caliphs of Cairo and later under the two Wazirs of Armenian origin, a prosperity worthy of Pharaonic or Alexandrian age was reflected

in the sphere of art". The main Fatimid art like all Islamic art was architecture. The building of the Azhar mosque shows a beautiful use of brick work and pointed arches, betraying a certain Iranian influence. It possesses in the Maghribi style a heavy square minaret. The mosque of Hakim completed in 393 A. H. marks the beginning of stone-work which culminated in the great Aqmar mosque of Ibn al-Bataihi. In the latter we find the characteristic Fatimid use of Kufic inscriptions, deep niches, pillared walks and elaborate wood-carvings. A distinguishing feature of the Fatimid style was the introduction in Islamic art of stalectite pendentives. The practice of building tomb-mosques was only introduced in the later Fatimid period by Badr al-Jamali. From his time onwards, we find the replacement of Iranian influence in architecture by the Armenian Byzantine style. The best examples of this are the three impressive gates built by Badr al-Jamali namely Bab an-Nasr, Bab al-Futuh and Bab az-Zuwayla.

In the museums of the world are to be found examples of the beautiful carved wood, bronzes and textiles of the Fatimid period. In Egypt, a land famous for its cotton, such centres as Dabiq, Dimyat and Tinnis produced in the Fatimid period textiles that were celebrated all over the world. The earliest known muslim binding came from Egypt from about the time of the Fatimids.

Above all the achievements of the Fatimid period was the happy and joyful society of the common people that existed then. Nasir-i-khusraw has given us a glowing account of Fatimid society even in the worst period of crisis. The joy of the time was expressed in the numerous festivals in which the population exulted. This heritage of joy has become an ingrained characteristic of the Egyptian people, and so do we find it today.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The first western study of Fatimid history was that of F. Wustenfeld who published his *Geschichte der Fatimiden-Caliphen* at Gottingen in 1881. It was followed by O'Leary's *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate*, London, 1923. These were based on general sources like Maqrizi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Khallikan, Abdul Mahasin and Severus of Ashmunayn. Then began the exploration of original Fatimid—Ismaili contemporary literature which made it necessary to rewrite the whole Fatimid history, The best effort towards this end has been made in Urdu by the late Dr. Zahid Ali who published his *Tarikhe Fatimiyin* at Hyderabad (India) in 1948.

On the origin of the Fatimids, the student must necessarily refer to four studies : (1) P. Mamour's *Polemics on the Origin of the Fatimi Caliphs* (London, 1934), (2) B.Lewis's *Origins of Ismailism* (Cambridge, 1939), (3) Ivanow's *Rise of the Fatimids* (Bombay, 1941) and (4) H. Hamdani's on the *Genealogy of Fatimid Caliphs* (Cairo, 1958).

On the doctrines of the Fatimids, the best summary is in H. Hamdani's *A Compendium of Ismaili Esoterics* (Islamic Culture, XI) and a detailed account in the recent Urdu publication of Dr. Zahid Ali, *Hamare Ismaili Madhhab Ki Haqiqat* (Hyderabad, 1956).

About the Qarmatians, the student should refer Massignon's article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam. For Druzes, he must refer a standard work of De Sacy; *Expose de la Religion des Druzes* (2 vols. Paris, 1838), which in addition gives a full biography of the Caliph Hakim. For legal history of the Fatimid period, the best short account will be found in A. Fyzee : *Qadin-Nuaman, The Fatimid Jurist and Author*. On Mustansir's time and Abbasid-Fatimid relations, there is A. Hamdani's *Sira of al-Muayyad* (London, 1950). On the close of the Fatimid period, we have Casanova's *Les Derniers Fatimides* (Paris, 1893). On the Tayyibi Daawa in Yaman, the reader may refer to H. Hamdani's *Sulayhiyun* (Cairo, 1953). For the administration under the Fatimids, a short account is available in A. R. Guest's *Governors and Judges of Egypt* (London, 1912). About the religious minorities under the Fatimid Caliphate, one could refer to J. Mann's *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs* (Oxford, 1920-22). On the economic life and trade-routes, a necessary reference must be made to Heyd's *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age* (Leipzig, 1885). The best account of Fatimid architecture is by Creswell in the relevant volume of his *Muslim Architecture*. Lamm has written on *Fatimid wood-work, its style and chronology* (Cairo, 1936).

Two recent publications must be noted—Hodgson's *Order of the Assassins* on the Nizari history of the Alamut period and Hollister's *Shia of India* for a general account of Fatimid movements in India. On the advent of Ismailism in India, there is A. Hamdani's *The Beginnings of the Ismaili Daawa in Northern* India (Cairo, 1956).

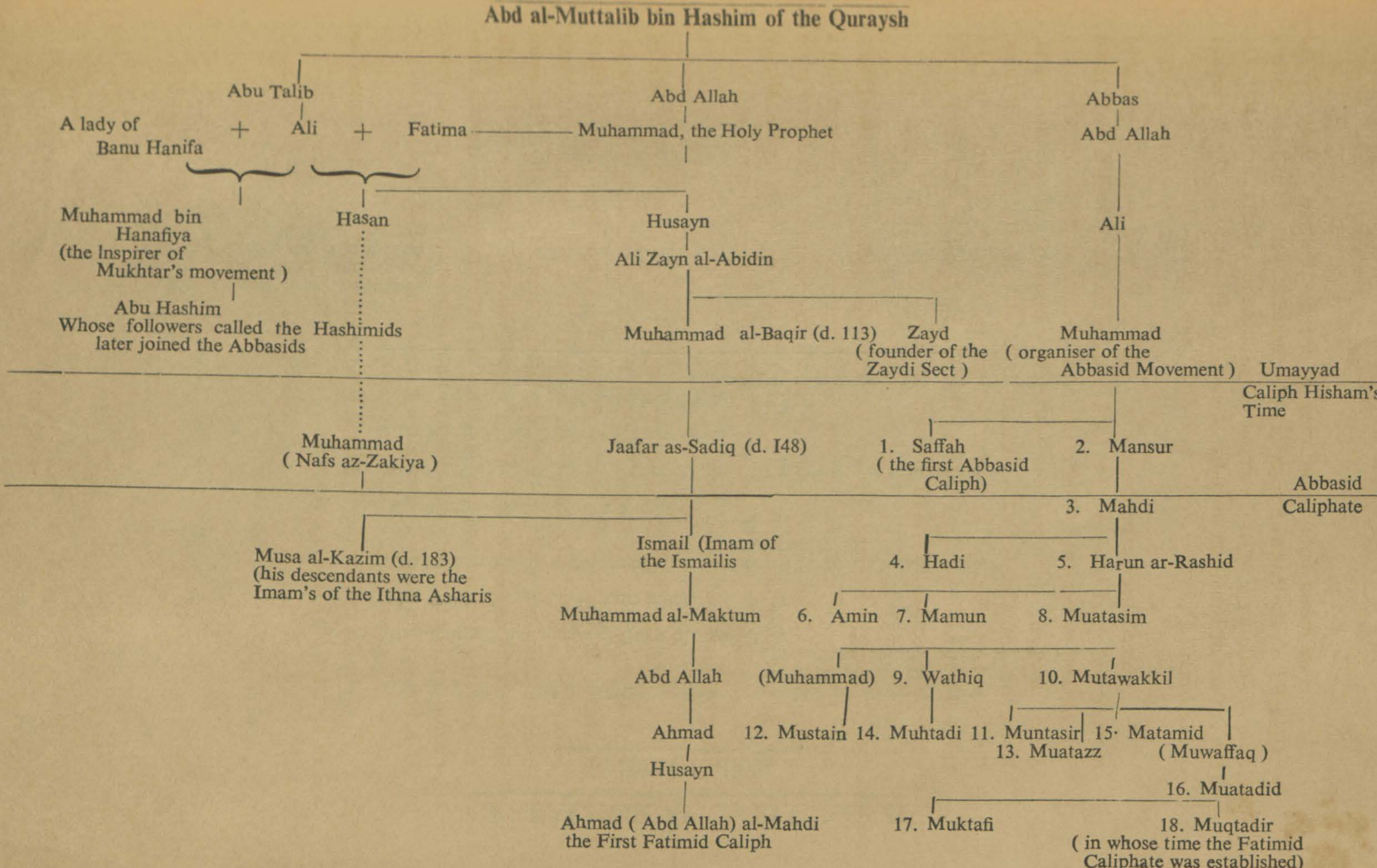
Three basic Fatimid texts in Arabic have been recently published in Cairo and must be referred to for a direct acquaintance with the Fatimid outlook and movement. One is Dai Abu Hakim ar-Razi's (d. 322 A. H.) *Kitab az-Zina,* a voluminous historical dictionary, being edited by H. Hamdani. Another is Qadin-Nuaman's (d. 363 A. H.) *Daaim al-Islam,* the standard Fatimid law-book, edited by A. A. A. Fyzee. And the third is Dai Kirmani's (ca. 411 A. H.) *Kitab Rahat al-Aql* on Fatimid philosophy, edited by Kamil Husayn.

A useful reference book is W. Ivanow's *Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1932) for anyone who wants to get acquainted with a bibliography of the vast treasure of Ismaili manuscripts discovered upto the date of its publication. Lane-Poole's *History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (London, 1901) contains chapters on Fatimid history written in his usual lucid and poetic style.

The author of this booklet has written a 500 page volume entitled *A Short History of the Ismailis* for the Ismaili Association of Pakistan, Karachi. It combines the results of the above researches, being comprehensive in scope and condensed in form. It gives a consistent rational interpretation and treats the Fatimid history sympathetically. Its main feature is the detailed history of the Ismaili Daawa. It is meant for both the research students and the laymen. Unfortunately, the Ismaili Association has not made it convenient to publish it since last so many years. It is hoped that they will soon allow it to see the light of day.

In the meanwhile this small book is presented to the readers as an abstract on Fatimid history.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE NO. 1



GENEALOGICAL TABLE NO. II

Fatimid Caliphs

1. Ahmad (Abd Allah) al-Mahdi billah (established Fatimid Dynasty in North Africa in 297 A. H. Qarmatians became active in Iraq)
2. Abul-Qasim Muhammad al-Qaim bi Amr Allah
3. Abu Tahir Ismail al-Mansur billah
4. Abu Tamim Maad al-Muizz billah (The new Fatimid Capital Cairo constructed in 358 H.)
5. Abu Mansur Nizar al-Aziz billah
6. Abu Ali Mansur al-Hakim bi Amr Allah (the Druze sect is founded)
7. Abu Maad Ali az-Zahir bi Ahkam Allah
8. Abu Tamim Maad al-Mustansir billah (d. 487 A.H.) (the saljuq rule in the Abbasid Empire begins)

Sons of al-Mustansir:

- Nizar (on whose behalf Hasan b. Sabbah established an independant state in Alamut. Imams in Nizar's line lived in Persia and India. Nizaris in India are called Khojas)
- 9. Mustaali
  - 10. Amir (d. 524 A.H.)
    - Tayyib (on whose behalf an independant Tayyibi Daawa was founded in Yaman which was later transferred to India. Tayyibis in India are called Bohoras.)
- (Muhammad)
  - 11. Abd al-Majid al-Hafiz
    - 12. Zafir
      - 13. Faiz
    - (Yusuf)
      - 14. Adid, the last Fatimid Caliph (d. 567 H.) (The time of the Second Crusade, the rise of Salahuddin al-Ayyubi and the 33rd Abbasid Caliph Mustadi—87 years before the Abbasid dynasty was brought to an end by the Mongol invasion.)

SOME CORRECTIONS

P. 13, last para, L. 8	The sentence begins with "However"
P. 16, first para, L. 3	Delete "to"
P. 16, third para, L. 5	"Umayyads" with "s"
P. 18, L. 14	Replace "353" by "358"
P. 19, third para, L. 4	Insert "from" between "and" and 'which"
P. 22, L. 10	Nuaman with "ua"
P. 23, L. 1	Omit "the" from "the Shiism"
P. 23, third para, L. 1.	Read "first" mission
P. 23, third para, L. 10	Read "Mahmud" of Ghazna
P. 28, last para, L. 2	After "giving" insert "up"
P. 35, L. 1	Read "Qadis" instead of "Qudis"
P. 46, L. 24	Insert "Fatimid" before "style"
P. 47, last para, L. 1	Insert "M" before "uayyad"
P. 48, L. 2	Change last "n" of "kalinjan" to "r"
P. 52, last para, L. 9	Insert ',in Yaman" aftet "remained"
P. 54, first para L. 10	Delete "who"
P. 56, L. 6	"Crusades" with "a"
P. 56, L. 13	"minor" with "o"
P. 58, L. 11	"peace and success" instead of "peace of success"
P. 63, L. 15	Read "finally" instead of "family"
P. 68, L. 9	Read "Ibn Ruzzik" instead of "Ibn Quzzik"
P. 69, L. 7	Read "Ibn-Ruzzik" instead of "Ruzzik"
P. 73, L. 30	Delete "nc" from "denouncement"
P. 74	The last two paras should be read on p. 73 immediately after the title "THE END".
P. 75, second para, last two lines :	inverted comas should not be before "more" but before "private"
P. 77, L. 25	Put a coma after "caliph".